

THE
ADVENTURES
OF

Miss Sophia Berkley.

Written by a young LADY.



D U B L I N:

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BRITISH MUSEUM



P R E F A C E.

I Shall make very little apology to the publick for laying before them the following letters. I shall only tell them, that they came into my hands among several other original papers, which were lately left me by a deceased friend. There appeared to me something extremely interesting in them; which determined me to print them. If the readers receive as much pleasure from them as I did, I am persuaded they will not think either their money or time ill bestowed.

As they were not, I believe, ever intended for the press, the candid reader will forgive any little inaccuracies in the language, which he may meet with.

P R E F A C E.

These letters were the production of a female pen; and as such ought to be, by the rules both of justice and politeness, entirely exempt from the severe scrutiny of criticism. It is therefore humble hoped, that those dreadful gentlemen the criticks will not meddle with them; or that if they do, they will kindly overlook the faults that are scattered up and down in them, in consideration of the beauties they abound with.

As they were now I believed, cover'd
longer for this page, the original reader will
be pleas'd to shew the evig'lar
sense which all the critics have

Tales



A

THE
ADVENTURES

O F

Miss *Sophia Berkly.*



LETTER I.

I NDEED, my dearest Constantia, you have enjoined me a task, which nothing but that attention I pay to your desires could induce me to comply with. You insist upon my giving you a circumstantial account of all that has happened to me, from my infancy to the time when I was so happy as to be acquainted with you. My life has been distinguished by a variety of incidents. I shall not find it very easy to recollect and arrange them in such a manner as to lay them regularly before you. But it is sufficient for me that my Constantia asks ; I will obey her in the best manner I am able ; her friendship must overlook or excuse all those faults which she will find in the course of this history.

B

I was

I was born in a large and flourishing city, situated very near the sea, and many miles distant from the capital. My father had been an officer of rank in the service of his sovereign, but had quitted his command some years before I came into the world, at the earnest desire of my mother, who loved him too tenderly to suffer his continuance in a post which must frequently expose him to danger. She was daughter to a nobleman. The match between her and my father was one of souls as well as bodies : they were united in every sense of the word. They tasted in marriage those pure and refined joys which few men can feel, or few women inspire. Their life was a state of uninterrupted felicity. This happiness was too complete to last long. Before I was a year old my mother died. I was too young to be sensible of my loss. My father has many times given me a description of my mother, and painted to me what he underwent when death tore her from his arms. It will not here be improper to give you an idea of my father's character.

He was a man of strict honour ; possessed of many great and excellent qualities ; but naturally hasty and impatient of controul. He was a little inclined to extravagance, though it was in him rather the effect of an unbounded generosity. This quality he inherited from his father ; who, by his great profuse-



profuseness, had reduced a very noble fortune to a very narrow one, and left two sons, of whom my father was the youngest, but very indifferently provided for. My father had no fortune but what his post in the army gave him ; this, though not inconsiderable, was hardly sufficient for a man whose ideas were like his. A year before he married, his eldest brother died, and left him his estate, which was about seven hundred pounds a-year. This, together with his command in the army, enabled him to make that figure in the world which the nobleness of his disposition inclineded him to wish, and which indeed his birth gave him a title to. He married my mother against the consent of her parents. There had for many years been an inveterate hatred between her family and ours, which had been occasioned by a law-suit concerning part of an estate which joined that of the two families together, and which each claimed as belonging to them. This had caused a sharp dispute, and after much contestation was decided in my grandfather's favour. This decision (whether just or not I shall not pretend to say) bred a most cruel enmity between the families, which subsisted when my father fell in love with my mother : it was therefore impossible to think of obtaining the consent of her parents ; who would rather have followed

their daughter to the grave than have seen her wedded to a man for whose person and family they had the utmost dislike.

Their affection for each other did not allow them to consult the rules of prudence. No misfortune appeared half so terrible to them as to be deprived of each other. They resolved therefore to run all hazards; and accordingly one night my mother stole softly out of bed; and, unheard by any one in the house, went down into the garden, from whence there was a door into the high road, of which she had a key. My father was there to meet her, with a chariot, and several men on horseback, to guard them till they came to the next large town, where a priest was ready to join their hands.

The next morning my father wrote a letter to Altamont (for so my mother's father was called) acquainting him with what had happened. He told him, that since the thing was now irremediable, he hoped he would make their mutual happiness complete, by generously forgiving the step they had taken, which nothing should have induced them to, but the undoubted assurance that he would never have consented to that union upon which both their happinesses depended. In short he made use of every argument that persuasion afforded him, to soften this hard-hearted father, for so he proved to be. He received an answer full

of bitter reproaches both against himself and his wife, whom he swore he would never again acknowledge for his daughter. He concluded by saying he would never give them a farthing, either during his life or after his death; and in this point he faithfully kept his word.

You may believe, my Constantia, this gave the new married couple great pain, but they soon forgot it. They were blest in the possession of each other, in comparison of which crowns or even worlds appeared trifles. Nor was this scene of bliss ever interrupted, till that cruel hour that snatched the tenderest, most loved wife, from the arms of the fondest husband. My education was now the only employment that could give the smallest degree of pleasure to my father; and in this indeed he spent most part of his time. My disposition for learning fully answered his expectation! How often, when I have done any thing that gave him pleasure, has he caught me in his arms, and cried with emotion, O Sophy! thou art the very image of thy once lovely mother!

I shall pass over all the juvenile part of my life, and begin at that period of it which became interesting both to myself and others. I was then just nineteen, my person was graceful, and I was universally reckoned handsome by the men. My father was

extremely indulgent. I had every thing I could wish for. The men all paid me the homage, that is in general so delightful to a young heart ; which, unacquainted with the common arts of that sex, mistakes for realities those appearances with which the men always endeavour to deceive our's. As for me, I was totally unacquainted with the arts of my sex. I had not a wish to be loved by any man who was indifferent to me ; and as all those I saw were so, I concluded I was incapable of love. O Constantia, how little are we acquainted with ourselves ! my heart remained untouched, only because I had yet met with no object great enough to fill it. I had naturally a turn for friendship. I found something in this passion more consistent with my ideas than any other ; I wished to meet with one who could think on this head like myself ; but here I was always disappointed. The young women of my acquaintance looked upon me as a romantic girl, and were incapable of conceiving those joys which flow from the sacred influence of friendship.

I began at last to persuade myself that my ideas were perhaps chimerical, when I fortunately became acquainted with a young lady, who had a soul superior to her sex, and whose delicacy and sentiments were upon a level with my own,

She

She was the daughter of an eminent physician. Her father had been dead many years. Her mother was a plain good kind of woman, and had, in her extreme affliction for the death of her husband, embraced the Roman Catholic religion : a religion which, as it addresses itself to the passions of mankind, can never chuse a better opportunity of taking possession of the mind, than when it is weakened by grief. Isabella, for thus my friend was called, had been brought up in this persuasion.

She had a very great understanding and a most exalted soul. All those lesser passions that degrade the mind, she was unacquainted with. She possessed no art but that of pleasing.

With this friend I passed many agreeable hours. Unruffled by any violent or tumultuous passions, our days passed on in a soft peaceful calm. Too soon alas disturbed ! Isabella was of a very sprightly temper ; that gaiety which is ever the attendant of innocence, reigned over all our actions and conversations. One day as we were sitting together, I observed an unusual seriousness in my friend's behaviour ; I pressed to know the reason, but she declined telling it me, alledging only that she was indisposed : as she was very sincere I believed what she said, and it made no farther impression on me ; but I found that the melancholy of
my

my dear Isabella continued and increased; and often perceived the tears start into her eyes. Sometimes she appeared buried in a profound reverie, from which when I spoke to her, she seemed to wake as one out of a trance.

All that vivacity which made her so pleasing was gone: but what was still more surprising than this was, that even to me, who had till then been the sharer of her thoughts, she concealed the reason of this sudden change. One day when we were alone, I took an opportunity to introduce the subject: I conjured her by all that friendship which had hitherto subsisted between us, not to conceal any longer from me the secret grief, which I too plainly saw had taken possession of her. Why, Sophy, said she, should you wish to know a weakness I would hide, if possible, even from myself. Having said this, a flood of tears filled her eyes: mine caught the infection. I embraced her tenderly, and entreated her to open her whole soul to one, of whose friendship and confidence she was most undoubtedly assured. Well, Sophy, said she, you shall know, though I am certain this knowledge will teach you to despise me. I used every argument to remove this apprehension from her, which was indeed unjust: I was too susceptible of every tender passion to pretend

with affected vanity, not to pity them in others.

Isabella then confessed that she loved; but that the object of her affection was entirely ignorant of it.

I saw nothing so terrible in this: I persuaded her that she would be happy in the possession of the heart she wished for; I did not believe any man whom she wished to gain could remain indifferent to her; and that he perhaps was suffering for her the very torments she underwent for him.

O Sophy, said she, you flatter me; I am too well assured Horatio has no attachment to me, and I would die ten thousand deaths, rather than he should discover my weakness: you, my loved Sophy, had the right of a friend to know this secret; yet even from you would I have concealed it had it been possible. After she had said this she left me, making me promise I would keep the secret inviolably.

I did not see Isabella any more that day. She wrote me word that she was in a situation fit only to be alone, and begged I would not make myself uneasy on her account.

I spent the day in reflections upon what had passed between us. I felt a sort of satisfaction to find my heart was yet my own; but I had a kind of curiosity to see Horatio,

of whom I had so often heard. He was the only son of a very antient family.

His estate lay near our's. He had been a friend to Isabella's father, and continued to visit her mother. The next day she came to breakfast with me; and seemed more gay than the preceding evening. I could not help telling her, I had a desire to see the man who had made so strong an impression on a heart, which had hitherto appeared almost insensible to feelings of this nature. You may soon satisfy that desire, said she; he dines at our house to-morrow. I will tell my mother to invite you; but take heed, added she, smiling, let my example warn you, though, continued she with a sigh, why should I say so? Horatio will not be as insensible to your charms as he is to me, and I shall perhaps find a powerful rival in my friend. I assured her she had nothing to fear from me, for that my heart was proof against any man.

I told her, however, that if she was in earnest I would not go: she seemed not pleased that I should suspect her of this, and insisted upon my dining with her mother, to which I consented and then we parted.

In the evening, as I was sitting with my father, I received a message from Isabella's mother desiring the favour of my company to dine with her the next day. I sent word

I would come, and spent the rest of the evening in a sort of expectation, for which I could not well account. The next day I went according to the appointment; there were several gentlemen at dinner, but I soon discovered which was Horatio. Among millions, indeed, he must have been distinguished.

O Constantia! how shall I teach you to conceive what a sight of this lovely youth inspired me with. His form and person was perfectly pleasing : the bloom of youth sat upon his cheeks. His eyes were a fine blue, and sparkled with a gentle lustre. His manners were easy ; his address full of that soft respect which insinuates itself more quickly into the heart than all those unmeaning airs which the generality of men assume ; and with which our sex is too frequently caught. His conversation was full of good sense, and perfectly consistent with that modesty of soul so little known among men, and yet the greatest charm they can possess. He seemed particularly struck with me. His conversation was generally addressed to me. His eyes were often fixed upon me, and when mine by accident met them, they were cast to the ground, with a look as if he reproached himself for the liberty he had taken. The company did not retire till late. I passed the night in agitation I had never yet felt. All my ideas

ideas were confused. Love, with all his fantastick train, took possession of my imagination. Horatio's image was ever present to me; all my thoughts related to him; his voice, his words, his actions, dwelt strongly upon me. I reproached myself severely for this weakness. I accused myself as guilty of the most unpardonable breach of friendship. Is it thus, thought I, that I requite my Isabella's confidence, by yielding to this unaccountable passion? and for whom? for a man I have not seen but once; and who perhaps has already forgot me. Here my pride took the alarm: how persuasive a pleader is love? I soon fancied I had discovered in Horatio, the same passion I felt in my own breast. Whilst I was in this tumult of thought, Isabella came into my room: the sight of her, for the first time, became painful to me. I knew she must have seen my weakness; I was ashamed and confused. Well, Sophy, said she, with a smile, do you now wonder at my loving Horatio? If I may guess by the blush that spreads your cheeks, you do not. I know what must be the consequence of your going to see Horatio.

Dear Isabella, said I, with an affected levity, I am glad to see you so merry this morning. I shall not contradict you, though you make me the object of your raillery.

Sophy

Sophia, answered she, I am not in a humour to joke. I am serious. You cannot deny you love Horatio. Do not fear to own it to me: I am not so poor in friendship, as not to sacrifice my peace to your's; besides, I have nothing to hope; Horatio does not love me, whom can I wish him to possess, so worthy as my Sophia? I am glad, added she tenderly, I have this opportunity of shewing how much dearer your happiness is to me than my own. This behaviour of Isabella filled me with distress. No, Isabella, said I, I will not be thus outdone by you; Horatio must be, shall be your's: at these words, Isabella smiled. My dear Sophy, said she, this can never be, Horatio loves you—I am sure he does: you were formed for each other. Think then no more of me: I shall soon conquer a passion, that will serve only to make me miserable. An involuntary sigh accompanied these words. We continued some time talking in this manner; each determined to be the sacrifice to the other's tranquillity. At length Isabella left me; I was not sorry to be alone. I had not been long before my father sent word to me to come down to him; I obeyed, but what was my surprize, when the first object that met my eyes was Horatio, whom my father presented to me. Sophia, said he, this is a gentleman with whom I have been

long desirous to be acquainted. I knew and esteemed his father particularly: I met him accidentally to-day, and have desired him to stay and dine with us.

Upon these words, Horatio approached to salute me, in the usual form. How great was my emotion! his did not seem less. I observed he faltered, and with difficulty pronounced some few words of course. I would have given the world to retire, but did not dare, lest Horatio or my father should suspect the reason. I endeavoured to recover myself as well as possible, Nothing remarkable passed during dinner; I even thought Horatio took less notice of me than the day before, but I quickly persuaded myself that this behaviour proceeded from his great delicacy. Soon after dinner Horatio withdrew: my father told him he should expect to see him again soon; to which he made a very polite answer, and retired, casting a look upon me as he went out of the room, which conveyed a thousand different meanings. He was no sooner gone than my father asked me what I thought of him? I was a little puzzled at his question, and made him such an answer as I doubt not shewed him I was so. I left my father rather earlier than usual, and spent the night in agitations little inferior to those I had experienced the night before. I began to believe Horatio really
joyed

loved me : I could easily see my father would be extremely rejoiced at so advantageous a match for me. Indeed, my lover's rank, person and fortune, gave him a sufficient title to any woman : the only obstacle I saw, was my friendship for Isabella ; and to such a height did I carry this friendship, that I secretly resolved, let the consequence be what it would, never to marry Horatio, unless I could do it without making her miserable. To purchase my own happiness at the expence of my friend's, was a meanness I should have despised myself for.

No one, I believe, ever carried their ideas higher upon these heads than I did ; though indeed I know not whether what I am going to relate to you of Isabella, will not lead you to imagine she went beyond me.

The day after Horatio had dined with us, she came and spent great part of it with me : she appeared more serene than usual, but never once mentioned my lover's name, and I did not care to introduce the subject. At parting, she told me that she was going for a few days to visit a lady ; that, as soon as she returned, she would let me know, and begged me to believe she was quite at peace. I fixed my eyes upon her when she said this, and thought I there read a very different language ; however, I took no notice, but tenderly embracing her,

we took our leave. As soon as I was alone, I gave myself up to reflection : I flattered myself that Isabella's good sense would get the better of her passion, resolving not to marry till this should happen : I was not displeased to find I had made some impression upon Horatio. A soft tranquility diffused itself through my mind : I went to bed, and enjoyed that repose which a mind devoid of guilt, is generally sure of finding. In a day or two Horatio returned to our house : my father insisted upon his staying all the evening, which, you may believe, was not unpleasing to him. His behaviour to me grew more and more particular : that timidity which is ever inseparable to those who are capable of real love, accompanied every thing he said and did.

When he left us, my father could not help telling me, that he was sure Horatio loved me ; he added, that he did not imagine I should have any dislike to receive the addresses of such a man as Horatio : that, on the contrary, he was sure my good sense would lead me to chuse a man of his character and manners. To this I only replied, that I had not considered the matter at all ; that therefore I could not give him a positive answer, but that I should endeavour in all things to obey him, as I was convinced his indulgence for me would never permit him to require any thing of me inconsistent with

with my own inclinations. No, my dear Sophy, said he, tenderly, I will never desire you to marry against your own consent. I then retired into my own apartment, where I found a note from Isabella, in which she told me, that something had prevented her from going the day she intended; but that she should set out the next morning, and that as soon as she got to her journey's end, she would write to me; she ended, by assuring me, she was quite easy, and begged I would forget she had ever loved Horatio, whom, she said, was now almost indifferent to her.

This, you may suppose, gave me the highest satisfaction: I began to think there was now no obstruction in my road to happiness.—I knew not, my Constantia, how many weary steps I had to go, before I arrived there.

Soon after this, Horatio came again to our house, and he declared to my father his sentiments with regard to me; adding, that all his hopes and joys depended upon me; and that if he was not happy enough to inspire me with the same tenderness he felt for me, he should be the most miserable of men. My father assured him nothing would give him greater satisfaction than an alliance with him, but that he had taken a resolution never to force my inclinations. To this Horatio replied, that he was inca-

pable of harbouring such a thought ; that greatly as he loved me, he would sooner renounce me for ever, than owe his happiness to any motive but my affection for him, which he flattered himself he might in time deserve, by the truth and delicacy of his love for me. After a little further discourse, my father sent for me, and pretending business, he left Horatio and me together. I shall not tire you with a description of what passed in this interview : I shall only tell you that Horatio declared his passion to me, in terms equally respectful and sincere ; that I received his declaration in such a manner as left him doubtful what kind of impression it had made upon me. After this his visits grew more frequent ; and as I was incapable of any disguise, I soon discovered to him my real sentiments.

Matters were in this situation, when I began to grow uneasy at not hearing from Isabella ; and as she had not sent me word where to direct to her, I could not write to her. I really dreaded lest some accident had happened to her, and resolved to go the next day to her mother's, and satisfy my apprehensions on this head.

I was sitting buried in these reflections, when on a sudden I heard my door open, and saw Isabella enter : I ran hastily to embrace her ; but what was my astonishment,

when

when I beheld the shocking alteration she had undergone since I saw her ! A deadly paleness clouded her face ; her eyes had lost their lustre ; a deep anguish was visible through her whole frame. The gay, the sprightly Isabella, was become the picture of grief and anxiety. No words can express what I felt at this sight. Ah ! Isabella, cried I, my dear Isabella, what do I see ? whence is this shocking alteration ? Be not alarmed, said she, I have indeed suffered greatly since I left you ; but my part is now taken, and I shall soon be restored to that peace which I have long been a stranger to. Sit down, added she, hear me without interruption, and you shall soon be convinced of what I say. I seated myself on a couch, and she by me. She went on thus : you, my dear friend, have been acquainted with my weakness from the beginning of it. You know my disposition too well to believe I feel upon occasions such as these, like the generality of mankind. I loved Horatio with a passion so chaste, that I can without a blush own it. I could with joy sacrifice my happiness to procure him a moment's pleasure : I am even glad I have so good an occasion to shew I am capable of this sacrifice.

You, my dear, love Horatio ; he returns your affection with all the ardour you can wish. Shall I, by an unpardonable weakness, be an obstruction to the happiness of

two, both infinitely dearer to me than myself?

I should be miserable if I thought myself unworthy of Horatio's love; or, what is still greater, his esteem. The first I do not wish for; the last I will endeavour to deserve, and my present resolution appears the only one that can make me worthy of it: I am come, my friend, continued she, with a voice that spoke the strong emotion of her soul; I am come to take an eternal farewell of you. How! my dear Isabella, cried I, amazed, what do you mean by these words? what rash resolution---. Sophy, interrupted she, you are mistaken, it is not a rash one: Heaven only can tell the agonizing hours it cost me before I could resolve upon it. O Sophy, it is a dreadful task to tear the soul from its darling object! I have suffered pangs for which there is no name. The violent struggle I have undergone has reduced me to the condition in which you see me; but the bitterness of the conflict is over; reason has got the better of passion. When she had spoke these words, she assumed a more serene voice and manner. You know, continued she, I am a Roman Catholick: I always loved solitude, even in my happier days. At present, it is my last and best resource: where can a heart, disappointed as mine is, hope for refuge, but in a cloyster?

At

At these words, I could no longer keep silence. No, Isabella, cried I, you shall never execute this horrid purpose, you shall not thus triumph over me. I swear by every thing most sacred, Horatio never—No more, replied she, putting her hand upon my mouth; make no rash resolution; your case and mine is widely different. You are in possession of Horatio's heart: your renouncing him would be a false romantick generosity----Had he loved me; then you, my dear Sophy, would, I am persuaded, have sacrificed yourself for me. I am only acting in the manner you, had you been in my situation, would have done: cease therefore to dissuade me from what I am resolved to do. Do not expose me to all the horrors of a second conflict. I dreaded this meeting: I foresaw your tenderness would make you unwilling to consent to my departure; I had even resolved to go away without giving you notice, but my friendship would not permit me to execute my intention. Early to-morrow I shall leave England; I shall go to Paris; I have a relation there, who is a nun; I shall take the veil in the same convent where she is. My mother has resolved to go with me, and spend the rest of her days near me.

Here Isabella stopt: I cannot tell which was the strongest, my sorrow at losing her, or my admiration at the greatness of her resolution.

resolution. I made use of every argument to deter her from going to France. I offered to delay my marriage with Horatio, till she should be in a situation to see it without pain. She told me, she could not answer for her own heart; that the sight of Horatio might, in a moment, undo all she had been doing. In short, she was determined beyond the power of persuasion to move her. She sat with me all the morning. A little before dinner she rose, in order to take her leave; but here her resolution failed her; a sudden gush of tears kept her a moment silent. Ah! Sophy, said she, I am still weak; I felt it this moment, like one whose soul is tearing from its abode. Is it possible I shall never---never again see you? I had no power to speak. What am I doing, continued Isabella—what a wretch am I thus to give you pain! It must be so---then tearing herself from me, she went out of the room, and left me with a heart just bursting with anxiety. I had never yet experienced any of these violent emotions: these, alas, were but the prelude to those I was destined to suffer!

The melancholy scene I have just related, made a strong impression upon me. I could not help looking upon myself as the cause of all that uneasiness which my dear Isabella had undergone. Perhaps, thought I, had not I unfortunately presented myself to Horatio's

ratio's eyes, he might in time have become sensible to Isabella's passion. Whilst I was in this situation, Horatio entered my room: he soon observed that something had happened to me of a disagreeable nature, and pressed to know the cause with so much tenderness, that, as I saw no reason to conceal it any longer from him, I gave him an account of all that had passed between Isabella and me. He was at once surprised and shocked: he said every thing on the occasion that could suggest itself to a generous and delicate mind.

My father seemed desirous to hasten our marriage. Horatio grew every day more and more impatient; and our nuptials were fixed at the end of three weeks. I received a letter from Isabella about ten days after her departure. It contained these words:

“ I arrived safe at Paris some days ago. I have taken the white veil, and at the expiration of the year shall change it for the black. I am perfectly at peace. No traces of my former weakness remain; and I have the pleasing reflection that I have gained so complete a victory over my own heart: a victory which without vanity I may say few women could arrive at. I like my situation extremely; there is nothing wanting to complete my happiness but the news of your marriage with Horatio. As the rules of my order does not allow me to receive

any

any letters after the expiration of the first six months, I must desire my dear Sophia to write to me as soon as possible."

ISABELLA.

I shewed this letter to Horatio. O cried he, when he had read it, why did not she meet a fate more equal to her deserts?

My happiness seemed now approaching to its highest period. O Constantia! little did I know this delightful prospect was in a moment to vanish; even at the time when I thought myself most secure of it.

I believe I have by this time wearied you. I shall lay down my pen to give both you and myself some respite.

I am my dear Constantia's
most fathful friend,

SOPHIA.

LETTER II.

IDoubt not, my dear Constantia, but you are anxious to know what sudden turn of fortune changed at once all my joy into affliction: I shall proceed to satisfy your curiosity immediately.

I think I told you before, that our house was situated near the sea-coast. Horatio and I used to walk frequently in an evening on the sea-shore, which was about half a mile distant from our house. It happened

two

two or three days before *that* appointed for our wedding, that we remained out longer than usual ; it was one of these charming nights towards the latter end of July, when the scorching heat of the day being over, the most delightful cool succeeds it ; a perfect serenity seemed diffused over the face of nature ; not a cloud appeared through the whole hemisphere ; no breath of wind was felt ; no noise was heard, except the gentle beating of the sea against the rocks, and the soft melody of the nightingales, who sweetly warbled through a large row of trees that grew at a small distance from us : the sea was without a wave ; every thing conspired to make our walk enchanting. Horatio and I were seated upon a piece of broken rock, which the sea had washed from its foundation and left just upon its borders. We passed two hours in this situation, enjoying that inutterable bliss which is so peculiarly the share of lovers. Scenes of this nature should always be left to the imagination of the reader ; for no strength of expression can convey any adequate idea of them. The time insensibly passed away ; we did not think of returning home, till we perceived night had almost stole upon our conversation. When we got home we found my father, who was already impatient at our long stay. It is very late, said he ; it is ten o'clock. Horatio assured him

he was mistaken; and pulling out his watch, shewed him it was but just past nine. O, says my father, smiling, you have put your watches back to cheat me; I suppose yours, Sophy, goes just the same with Horatio's. I laughed at my father's idea, and put my hand to my side to look at my watch; but what was my surprize, when after looking for it some time I found I had lost it! The watch only I did not regret; but there was hung to it a small picture of my mother's which my father gave me, and on whcih I knew he set an inestimable value. I could not help shewing the most lively concern; I determined to go back to the spot where I sat, believing I might have dropt it there. To this Horatio would by no means consent, saying, that the damp air of the sea at that late hour might be dangerous; that he would return alone and seek it, and that he was sure he should find it; then ordering one of his servants to follow him, he returned to the sea shore. O, Constantia! the fatal moment now approached whence I may date all the horrors that succeeded it. Horatio had been gone near an hour, when I began to grow uneasy at his not returning. My father endeavoured to calm my fears by telling me, that Horatio not finding my watch, was gone further upon the coast to seek it; and that it was probable he would spend a great deal of time in looking

looking for it, as he would be very uneasy at returning without it. This eased me for a while, but at last midnight came, and no tidings of Horatio. My fears now returned with new violence : a thousand foreboding horrors took possession of me ! I shuddered with the most cruel apprehensions. My father in vain endeavoured to persuade me there could be no danger ; every moment added new strength to my fears. I conjured my father to go and see what was become o' Horatio ; he consented, and taking a pair of pistols he went out immediately. I no sooner found myself alone, than I became a prey to every terrifying thought that could enter the head of a human being : millions of strange phantastic images rose before my eyes ; I spent a quarter of an hour in the most racking suspence ; too soon, alas ! the fatal certainty appeared more cruel, if possible, than the suspence itself.

The room in which I sat was next to the street ; I heard on a sudden a violent knocking at the door, and a confusion of voices, among which I distinguished my father's. I rose, and almost sinking between fear and hope, I ran to see whether my Horatio was there or not ; but oh, heavens, what was my horror ! when I saw my father enter with a look of wild despair, followed by a great number of ill-looking fellows, two of whom brought between them the

dead body of Horatio's servant, all covered with wounds and blood. I no longer doubted my lover was murdered ; I fainted and fell into the arms of my maid, whom the noise had summoned to the door. I lay in this condition for above an hour, and when I recovered the use of my senses, it was only to wish for the entire loss of them. I found my father seated by my bed side with a countenance full of the deepest anguish. I remained a few moments unable to speak, at length, in a low fainting voice, I conjured my father to tell me what was become of Horatio. To this question he made no reply. — Alas ! cried I, what am I to think of that cruel silence ? my dear Horatio is murdered, and I am the cause of his death.

At these words I sunk down in a speechless agony of grief. O Constantia ! I must quit my pen a moment ; the sad scene raises in my mind a fresh sense of the pangs it once filled me with whilst I was in this situation ; my father ordered all the servants who were in the room to withdraw. O my loved child ! said he, do not thus abandon yourself to despair : this is indeed a most severe trial, but endeavour to bear up against it ; it is on occasions like these, that we should make use of that reason which Heaven has given us for our support under the cruel pressure of affliction : believe me, my dear child, continued he, with tears in his eyes

eyes, I have felt too severely, the pangs
that attend the loss of what we love, to
blame your grief. O cried I, then all is
over---my misery is beyond remedy---I will
not deceive you, replied my father, Horatio
is no more.---O Constantia, conceive if
you can, what I felt at these dreadful words.
My tears, which had yet unceasing flowed,
had no more vent. Lost to all sense of
every thing that surrounded me, I remained
a long while without uttering a sigh or groan.
My father was alarmed at this seeming tran-
quility: he trembled for my life. O Sophy,
said he, will you not bear up a little for my
sake? Consider my life is bound up in yours;
O do not break my heart. Pierced to the
quick at his distress, I made an effort over
my grief, and raising myself up, No, said
I, I will not add to the murder of my Ho-
ratio that of my father. In spite of the
agonies my heart was tore with, I assumed
a calmer air: I entreated my father to retire
to his chamber, assuring him I would en-
deavour, if possible, to take a moment's
rest. It was some time before I could pre-
vail on him to leave me, which at last he
did, making me promise that if I found I
could not get my repose to send him word,
that he might return to me. My father
was no sooner gone, than throwing off all
restraint I delivered my whole soul up to
despair. I passed the remainder of the night

in the most violent torments. In vain I endeavoured to lose my cares a moment in sleep ; if I closed my eyes but an instant, Horatio's image arose to my imagination all pale and bleeding. Great God ! how surprising an alteration had a few hours made : from the highest happiness, I was at once cast into an abyss of misery !

When the morning came I rose ; my father entered the room as soon as I was drest. I ran to embrace him ; he prest me in his arms. I saw tears fill his eyes : every painful idea rushed full upon me ! I sunk upon his breast without uttering a word ; he rais'd me with that tenderness he had ever shewn me. As soon as I was able to speak, I entreated him to tell me in what manner my dear Horatio had been murdered. My father replied in the following terms. After I had left you, I had not gone ten paces forward before I met a great number of country fellows, bringing with them the dead body of Horatio's servant ; they informed me, that having staid out longer than usual at a feast, they were returning home ; and that passing near the sea-shore, they saw Horatio and his servant fighting with four men who had just got out of a vessel, which was lying in a small creek hard by ; that Horatio's servant was stretch'd on the ground, as they imagined dead ; and that his master having likewise fall, the

fellows

fellows were beginning to strip him; but seeing them advance and unwilling to lose their prize, they carried Horatio's dead body on board their vessel, and were out of sight before these people could come up with them. They examined the body which lay upon the shore, and finding some signs of life in it, they threw cold water on his face; that having recovered the use of his senses, he told them that his master had been set upon by a crew of pyrates who frequently infested those coasts, and often came down to that shore when it was dark, in hopes of meeting with somebody: that his master defended himself for an hour, but at last one of the villains gave him so violent a blow on the head, that he expired immediately. The poor wretch had hardly strength to utter these words, and fainting with the loss of blood, he fell down speechless, and died before they could bring him home. Here my father ceased.

Paint to yourself, my Constantia, the different horrors that filled me whilst I listened to this shocking account! I cannot recal to mind this period of my life without trembling at the remembrance of it.

What days of tears, what heights of agitation did I spend! Sometimes a flood of tears gave a momentary relief to my heart —then plunged in anxiety, I remained for hours totally absorbed in my own racking thoughts.

thoughts. The sight of day-light became painful to me; every object presented some new pangs to my tortured soul: before my father indeed I endeavoured to disguise the excess of my sorrow; but when I was alone I gave my soul its fill--even to distraction!

When I considered myself as the cause, the innocent cause of my Horatio's death, I grew wild; and I really believe, had not my regard for my father stopt me, I should have put an end to a life which was become insupportable to me. O Isabella! thought I, how is thy fate to be envied; thou art at this moment tranquil, whilst I am struggling under an affliction worse than ten thousand deaths.

I then wrote a letter to Isabella, in which I told her what had happened to me; and ended by saying, that if I had been of her religion I would soon have followed her example.

The first sharpness of my grief being past, I fell into a kind of desponding melancholy; my pangs were less lively, but not less deep. Stranger to every peaceful sensation, I sought silence and solitude. I never spoke to any human being except my father; the whole universe was indifferent to me. I dragged on a life without the most distant hope of relief but from the loss of it; when something happened that roused

me from this lethargy to the more quick feelings I had just begun to lose.

My father was seized with a very violent fever, which in ten days laid him in his grave. I will not attempt to describe my redoubled misery; the scene I have already related to you will convey to you some little idea of it.

When my father found himself at the point of death he called me to him, and ordering all the attendants to withdraw, he bad me take a chair and sit down by his bed-side. I obeyed, and he spoke to me in the following terms. I am going to that tribunal where every action will appear in its true colours; there is but one thing that hangs heavy on my parting soul, and that is the condition in which I leave you. I was going to speak, but he stopt me and went on thus: I must now tell my child a secret which I have long kept from her, because I hoped it would not be necessary for her to know it. I have been too profuse in my manner of living---my whole estate is gone, and you are left to poverty and distress! At these words he fell into convulsions. The violent agitation which his tenderness for me threw him into, was too great for his strength to support.

I used every method possible to restore him. He at last opened his eyes, and casting

The ADVENTURES of
casting them upon me, he thus in a dying
voice continued;

I had built all my hopes upon your marriage with Horatio, when it pleased heaven to take him from us. I knew his fortune was more than sufficient for you both; this made me not anxious about my own estate, but, alas! I am justly punished for my extravagance! I have examined into the situation of my affairs, which I had too long neglected; I find there is but a very scanty part remaining; I have several debts, and when they are paid, I fear the remainder will be but very inconsiderable.

I threw myself upon my knees, and summoning all my resolution to my aid, that he might not observe my agony, I assured him that I was perfectly satisfied; that I was very capable of providing for myself, and that I conjured him not to let a thought of me disturb his peace. All I could say was to no effect: he could not think of leaving me in such a condition without suffering agonies, which increasing his fever threw him into a violent delirium, in which he remained for some hours, all which time I spent on my knees by his bed-side. Very late in the evening he came a little to himself, but refused to take any of the things which the physicians offered him. No, said he, you may spare yourselves the trouble; my hour is come, and all human assistance

is

is vain. He then threw a mournful glance upon me; and again growing delirious, he remained so till three o'clock in the morning, when he expired in my arms.

O Constantia! what a moment was this! I sunk down upon the floor, and remained entirely senseless till the morning. But O Heaven! what pen can paint the soul-rending agonies I awaked to! I found all the servants weeping by my bed-side: O, cried I, why have you brought me again to life? What now remains for me? O Constantia, what horrors rushed upon my imagination! What are all the torments of a rack when compared with those exquisite pangs that tear the human mind upon occasions like these!

I will dwell no longer upon a scene that must pain a heart feeling as my Constantia's. Although I have often endeavoured to reflect calmly on this period of my life, the retrospect is yet insufferable.

After the first impressions of grief were subdued, I grew more resigned to my situation: when the mind has been violently agitated by the passions, it sinks insensibly into a kind of melancholy calmness. I found my father's affairs were indeed in a very bad condition! He had not even left an account of his debts; so that his creditors taking advantage of my sex, and ignorance in these matters, stript me, under pretence

pretence of what my father owed them, of every thing in the world, except one hundred pounds which they generously gave me; for even that they said, was more than remained due to me after the payment of my father's debts. The house we lived in went among the other things. They allowed me a week to remove in, and to seek for another habitation.

I dismissed all the servants, having no further occasion for them. I kept only a young woman who was my own maid, and who had been with me from my infancy. I resolved immediately to quit a place, where every object recalled to me some past misery. I determined to go to London, though I had no acquaintance there, my father having never left the country since the death of my mother. I was quite unacquainted with the place I was going to; but I was too indifferent about life to have any apprehensions whatever. I took with me Juliet (that was my maid's name) who was tolerably well acquainted with London, having lived there before she came to me. Thus, at the age of twenty, you behold me destitute of money or friends; having already undergone two of the severest trials that can happen to a woman upon the point of entering the place in the world, where, for a female, experience and protection are the most necessary.

consist.

Here,

Here, my dear Constantia, I will conclude my letter with assuring you,

I am

ever truly yours,

SOPHIA.

LETTER III.

I Hired a post-chaise, and taking with me my cloaths and what money I had, accompanied by my faithful Juliet, I set out for London, where I arrived safe, after a journey of four days.

I was in one of those situations, where the mind borrows relief, even from the excess of its distress; and a total indifference to all things that pass around us, wears for a while the air of inward peace and content. As I knew no body in town, I left it intirely to Juliet's direction to stop where she thought best. She carried me to a cousin of her's who kept a great shop in the Strand; as she informed her relation who I was, he treated me with all imaginable respect; and after having made many excuses for the poorness of the reception he could give me, I was conducted into a small but neat apartment, where Juliet entreated me to stay till she found out a proper place for me to lodge in. After having brought me a dish of chocolate, she left me in order to go and seek for lodgings.

E

I was

I was no sooner alone, than I began to reflect upon the prodigious alteration which so short a period of time had made in my situation. I could hardly persuade myself, that I, who a twelvemonth ago, was blest in the possession of the tenderest lover, and the kindest father, was now exposed to a faithles world, unfriended and alone ! I felt however something within, that whispered me, I was superior to my fate. After what I had already suffered, I did not believe anything could make an impression upon me. Juliet returned in about an hour : I have found, said she, a place which I believe will suit you, and I have agreed with the person to whom the house belongs, in case you approve of it when you see it. She then told me, that she had been with an acquaintance of her's, who had recommended her to a milliner that let lodgings, and who was looked upon by the neighbours as a person of merit, and undoubted good character ; adding that she had been there, and found every thing answer her expectations ; and that she doubted not but I should be very well satisfied with the lodgings. I could not help shewing some little reluctance at going among people with whom I was totally unacquainted. Juliet assured me I had no reason to be afraid, adding, with tears in her eyes, that if I chose to have her live with me, she would never leave me ; that

that she should be sufficiently paid in being with me; and as she had saved money in service, she would never take any wages. This poor creature's goodness drew tears from me. In situations like mine, every mark of tenderness has a double force.

I went with Juliet to the place I have mentioned. I no sooner saw Mrs. Williams (for so my landlady was called), than I conceived an affection and confidence for her; she seemed about thirty. She was tall and genteel; she was not handsome, but there was a great sweetness in her countenance, though an air of dejection was visible in her behaviour. This increased my regard for her: I did not doubt but she had been unhappy as well as me; and there is a secret sympathy in grief that always unites itself to those who seem touched by the same passion. I agreed without any hesitation for the lodgings, which consisted of a neat bed-chamber and dining-room: I then desired Juliet to return to her cousin's for my things, and seated myself at the earnest desire of Mrs. Williams, by the fire in the parlour where she was, where I waited impatiently for Juliet's return. Mrs. Williams and I sat together, without much conversation passing between us. She easily perceived, by the melancholy which was strongly painted in my face, that I was unhappy; and she knew by experience, how

little any conversation is agreeable to a mind at variance with itself. She heated some wine, and brought it to me; I at first refused it, but she pressed me to take it, in so obliging a manner, that at last I made a shift with some difficulty to swallow it. Juliet returned pretty soon, and brought with her my things: Mrs. Williams then advised me to go to bed; with which request I very willingly complied; for, as you may believe, I stood greatly in need of refreshment. The excessive fatigue I had sustained both in mind and body, together with the hot wine I had taken, threw me into a profound sleep, which was the only one I had enjoyed since that fatal night, of which I have given you a description. When I waked in the morning, I found myself much refreshed, and in more tolerable spirits than usual. Whilst I was dressing, Mrs. Williams came into my room, and enquired very tenderly how I had slept, and whether I would do her the honour to breakfast with her? To this I willingly consented, and Mrs. Williams left me to go and get the things ready: As soon as she was gone, Juliet began to tell me, with an air of concern, that she had done something, for which she was afraid I should be displeased with her. I assured her I should not, as I was very sure she would do nothing that could give me reason to blame her. She then

then told me, that when I was gone to bed, Mrs. Williams desired her to sit down and sup with her; that, in the course of their conversation, she asked her so many questions about me, and appeared to interest herself so much in what concerned me, that she could not refrain telling her my whole story; at which Mrs. Williams shed many tears, and exprest great anxiety for me.

I was very far from being displeased at what Juliet had done: I was naturally very open; and besides, I really had a confidence in Mrs. Williams, and which indeed she deserved.

I then went down to breakfast in the parlour; there was something extremely engaging in Mrs. Williams's manner; It was very easy to discover that she was superior to her situation; her conversation increased and justified the good opinion I had conceived of her. We soon became intimate; and she seemed to put as much confidence in me as I did in her: she gave me an account of her life, which will take up too much of my time to relate to you particularly. I shall only tell you that she was a clergyman's widow; her husband, at his death, had left her in such narrow circumstances, that she was obliged to have recourse to the way of life she was in for a subsistence.

I now began to consider what was to become of me ; my hundred pounds was not likely to last long ; and it was necessary for me to think of some way to get my bread in. I consulted Mrs. Williams about this, who very generously offered to take me partner in her business. To this proposal I consented with joy ; and having no longer an occasion for Juliet, I dismissed her. I would have given her five guineas, but it was impossible for me to prevail on her to accept of it. She only desired leave to come and enquire now and then if I was well : I assured her I should always be glad to see her, and it was not without regret that I parted with this poor faithful creature.

I could not prevail upon Mrs. Williams to let me put any more than fifty pounds into her hands ; notwithstanding which, she insisted upon dividing the profits of the business equally between us.

I now began to enjoy a kind of tranquility ; I thought myself remarkably lucky, in having met with such a friend as Mrs. Williams. I found always a pleasure in her conversation : she had a very excellent understanding, improved by a liberal education. She had a greater share of reason than commonly falls to the lot of any one person. Never did I know a mind so free from prejudices and partialities of every sort. Her temper was a perfect harmony : with the

the utmost tenderness and sensibility of disposition, she possessed the most heroic force of mind: she was free from foibles of every kind; yet did I never know any one who made so great allowances for them in others. She possessed that true philosophy of soul, which consists in governing the passions; not in superciliously pretending to be without them. She used often to give me excellent lessons, which have since been of great use to me on many occasions. As I was born without ambition, I found no difficulty in resigning that situation in life which I had been brought up to expect.

I now found myself tolerably happy. The remembrance of past miseries stole upon me; but the pain I felt from the recollection of them, was no means violent. Alas, Constantia, I was still to suffer! I was not destined to enjoy peace: I was only permitted to taste it, that the total privation of it might be more bitter to me.

Mrs. Williams did not keep an open shop; she had however very great business: all those who had been acquainted with her husband, came to buy what they wanted of her. One day, as we were together in the parlour, I saw a chariot, and three footmen behind it, stop at our door. A young man very richly dressed alighted from it, and coming into the room where we sat, he asked to see some Brussels lace for ruffles.

He

was extremely handsome, but had an air of affectation and assurance in his address, which made him very disagreeable.

Mrs. Williams shewed him several pieces of lace, to all which he made some objection ; she told him, she had a great deal coming over soon, and that it was probable he might find some amongst it more to his taste than any thing she had then. He assented to this, and taking only a pair for the present, he said he would return in a few days again. Mrs. Williams told him she would save him that trouble, by sending it to his house ; but he answered with a smile, that he had less to do than she, and that he would come himself.

He then went away, and my friend began to give me some account of him. Never said she, was the power and will of doing ill, so compleatly joined as in Castilio. He is just come to the possession of an immense estate, which he spends in the gratification of every inordinate desire. He has been the ruin of several young women ; and is so far from being ashamed of it, that he publickly boasts of it. There are no vile arts and contrivances he does not put in practice for the execution of his projects : I tremble whenever he comes into my house, and yet I dare not deny him entrance ; for, if I did, he would never rest till he had revenged himself upon me.

I could

I could with difficulty believe there was such a man as this, by his character, seem'd to be. Mrs. Williams told me that she had observed he had taken particular notice of me. Heaven forbid! added she, that he should have taken a fancy to you; for I should dread the consequences of it. This suggestion shocked me excessively. Mrs. Williams and I agreed, that if he came again, I should not appear, and that she should pretend I was gone out. About a week after this, as I was sitting working at the window, I saw Castilio's chariot stop; I immediately retired, but could not get soon enough up stairs to prevent his having a glimpse of me. As soon as he entered the parlour, he asked where I was? Mrs. Williams told him I was not at home. How! says he; why, I saw her go up stairs this moment. Mrs. Williams assured him must be mistaken; for that she saw me go out about a quarter of an hour ago. Very well, cried he, smiling, I understand you. It is more than I do you, Sir, returned Mrs. Williams with a severe look: upon which he assumed an air of respect. I hope, Madam, I have done nothing to offend you. You seemed, Sir, replied Mrs. Williams, as if you imagined Sophia was at home, notwithstanding I told you the contrary; but supposing she was, I do not see of what consequence it would be to you. Of more than

than you imagine, replied he, with a pretended sigh.

Here Mrs. Williams endeavoured to change the conversation, for she was afraid of a farther explanation; but Castilio constantly resumed it: he went so far as to ask, who I was, and whether I was married or not? At these words Mrs. Williams, who was incapable of fearing any thing, told him with an air of indignation, that she could not imagine what he meant by so odd a behaviour; and added, that she would never again put it in his power to use her in such a manner. Castilio asked ten thousand pardons for what he had done; assured her that he would never again mention my name to her. He then bought several pieces of lace, to the amount of a hundred pounds; and making a low bow, took his leave. During their discourse, Mrs. Williams observed that he had put in his pocket a piece of paper which lay upon the table; but, as she saw nothing writ upon it, she imagined he had taken it up without knowing what he did; as he seemed very absent two or three times. He was no sooner gone than I came down stairs, and my friend gave me an account of the foregoing conversation. I own, said she, I am not a little alarmed; he has, I am sure, some designs against you. I wish to heaven he had never seen you. So do I, said I; but since it has hap-

happened so, I see no reason for apprehension. Whatever his intentions are with regard to me, it is impossible he should ever put them in execution, for I am determined to keep out of his sight. Ah! replied she, you little know of what he is capable: I have heard such instances of his genius for mischief as would astonish you. However, we must endeavour to keep upon our guard and leave the rest to providence. My little experience in the arts of mankind, made me less afraid on this occasion than I should otherwise have been. Too soon, alas! I was taught to know that virtue and innocence are but feeble guards against treachery and artifice.

Several days past, and we heard nothing of Castilio; I was persuaded he had forgot me, or that, perhaps, he had never thought about me at all.

As we were one evening at tea, we heard a violent rap at the door, and were greatly surprised to see Castilio enter the room. It was impossible for me to retire; so I determined to set a good face upon the matter, and keep my place. Castilio, with an assurance peculiar to himself, seated himself by us. You will doubtless wonder, Madam, said he, turning to Mrs. Williams, to see me here so unexpectedly: but I am come to consult you about an affair, upon the success of which my future happiness depends.

You

You will forgive me, Madam, (addressing himself to me, with a submissive air) if I beg leave to entertain your relation a moment in private. I rose upon his saying this, glad of an opportunity to withdraw, and retired to my own apartment, wondering what could be Castilio's business with Mrs. Williams. In about half an hour, I heard him call his chariot: I immediately went down stairs, where I found Mrs. Williams with a countenance full of anger. Ah! Sophia, said she, this man is a greater monster than I even took him for: would you believe it, my dear, he has had the unparalleled assurance to tell me that he is violently in love with you, and has dared to shock my ears with the most infamous proposals? He offered me five hundred pounds a year, if I will prevail upon you to live with him. A sensation I was yet unacquainted with, shot itself through my soul at these words. How! cried I, transported with rage, did the villain dare do this? All the miseries I have undergone are trifles, compared to this outrage of my honour.

There was a time when an insult of this kind would have met with the punishment it deserves; but I have no longer a father, a lover, to protect me! O could they know to what I am exposed!

Shame, confusion, and indignation at once took possession of my soul—I threw myself

myself upon a chair, and abandoned myself to a thousand mortifying reflections. Mrs. Williams endeavoured to comfort me as much as lay in her power. Believe me, my dear child, said she, clasping me tenderly in her arms, these various trials are but so many opportunities which heaven throws in your way of shewing your firmness of mind, and that resignation to its will which alone can intitle us to any prospect of happiness hereafter. Notwithstanding all Mrs. Williams could say, I remained very uneasy for several days. My mind was filled with a thousand boding apprehensions, too soon realized ! I went out one evening with Mrs. Williams, to a friend of hers to drink tea. We were walking home about nine o'clock ; when, as we were going through a narrow obscure street which turned into that we lived in, I found myself suddenly seized by two men, who endeavoured to bind a handkerchief over my eyes. I screamed out as loud as I could, but one of the villains thrust me into a post-chaise, which at that moment drove up to us ; and getting himself into it, he ordered the postillion to drive away as fast as he could. The fellow set spurs to his horse, and in a moment we were out of hearing of the mob, who by that time were gathered to the place where I had been seized. The man who was in the chariot

with me, told me I had nothing to fear, for that I was in very good hands, but begged I would consent to have the handkerchief bound over my eyes : for I had struggled so much with him, when he first laid hold on me, that he had not been able to put it on. I was so frightened, that I had hardly power to speak ; but at last, recovering myself as well as I could, I asked him who he was ? to what end he had treated me in this brutal manner ? and where he was going to carry me ? To all these questions, he told me he had no power to answer, but I should soon have my curiosity satisfied : he then renewed his request of blindfolding me ; to which I consented, dreading some insult in case I refused to let him tie the handkerchief round my head. You will easily conceive my dear Constan-
tia, what I felt upon this occasion : I did not doubt but this was some contrivance of Castilio's. I gave myself over for lost ; I knew I had nothing to expect from a man of his character : I felt however a sort of resolution in my own breast, which seemed to arise in proportion to my misfortunes. I had already suffered too much to be greatly anxious about what was to come. The first attacks are always the least supportable : the mind becomes, by repeated trials, habituated, tho' not reconciled to misfortunes. We travelled prodigiously fast ; if the pos-

tilion

tition abated his pace, though but for a moment, the man who was with me called out to him to go on, and threatened him with the most horrid imprecations, if he did not make more haste.

I often expressed great uneasiness at having my head bound in this manner; but my conductor assured me, he did not dare disobey his orders in that particular. He frequently asked me how I did, and whether I would take something? adding that he had some wine and biscuit in his pocket. This, you may believe, I refused; but he still continued to press me, saying, we had a long way to go, and that I should be faint with fasting. It matters not, said I, what becomes of me: he did not however cease his importunities. At last, I said, I would swallow something if he would take the bandage off my eyes, hoping by this means to see whereabout I was. To this he consented, making me promise to let him bind it on again when I had done: he then loosed the handkerchief, and I found we had travelled all night, for it was broad day-light; and looking out, I perceived we were galloping very fast over a large plain; but what part of the country we were in, I was utterly at a loss to find out. I perceived the man who was with me, was an ill-looking, ill dressed creature, and had something so brutal in his face, that I began to wish

for the handkerchief about my eyes again, that I might not behold so disagreeable an object. He took a little bottle of wine out of his pocket, in which he put a small piece of biscuit : I forced a little bit of this down my throat, and then the wretch tied the handkerchief over my eyes again.

We continued to travel at a prodigious rate, till at last the post-chaise stopt. Good God, what was my terror at that moment ! I was yet uncertain what strange fate I was reserved to. The man now took off the bandage from before my eyes ; I saw we were before a large house, which had a very magnificent appearance. Two servants came to let us in ; I hesitated a moment, whether I had not better refuse to follow them, and by screaming out attempt to bring somebody to my assistance ; but I considered that every body around me was in the plot against me ; and that, by acting in this manner, I should only expose myself to some insult. I resolved therefore to resign myself to Providence ; and following my conductors, I was led into a very handsome apartment, which the fellow told me was mine. I was going to ask them some questions, but they prevented me by retiring immediately. I then began to contemplate my situation ; I doubted not but this was Castilio's house, and that he had caused me to be forced away in this unheard-of manner

manner. The knowledge I had of him, and his shocking behaviour to me at London, gave me reason to apprehend the most unmanly usage from him. I armed myself with all the resolution I was mistress of; and determined, if I found it necessary for the preservation of my honour, to put an end to a life which I could not preserve without infamy. I seated myself on a chair by the fire-side; I was excessively fatigued; want of rest, joined to the extreme agitation of my mind, had made me so weak, that, had not my fears kept me awake, I really believe I should have fallen asleep. After I had sat about ten-minutes, there came a pretty looking young woman into the room; who approaching me with an air of diffidence, asked me what I would please to take? Nothing, replied I, faintly; who bid you ask me? My master, madam, said she. And who is your master? At these words the girl stared me in the face---How, madam! do not you know my master? No, indeed, replied I, I only know, that whoever he is, he is a villain.

I shall be obliged to you, continued I, if you will tell me who he is, and what are his designs against me. Lord bless me, madam, replied she, I thought you had been his wife! His wife! cried I, in astonishment. Yes, madam, my master sent down word to us to get every thing in re-

dineſ; for that he was just married, and that his lady was to come down here to-night. Good God, was there ever such un-heard of impudence! Alas, continued I, weeping, I am undone for ever!—The poor girl seemed moved at my concern. Ah! madam, said ſhe, you are then among the number of thoſe unhappy ladies who have fallen a ſacrifice to Castilio's artifices? I know by fatal experience of what he is capable. Here we heard ſomebody coming up ſtairs: it is Castilio, ſaid Fidelia (for ſo ſhe told me ſhe was called.) I now began to tremble; all my resolution forſook me. For heaven's fake, cried I, holding her by one hand, do not leave me, I ſhall faint if you do. I had hardly ended these words when Castilio entered the room, and made a ſign to Fidelia, who instantly withdrew.

I was ready to ſink into the earth. He came up to me; and assuming an air of concern, the ſtep I have taken, madam, ſaid he, muſt I fear make me appear in a disagreeable light to you, but if you knew the ſentiments of my heart, you would rather pity than condemn me.—Perceiving I trembled he went on—For heaven's fake, madam, diſſipate all your fears; you ſhall meet with nothing but the strictest honour from me. Is the manner you have treated me in, ſaid I, recovering myſelf as well as I could, conſiſtent with what you ſay? Did
your

your behaviour at London wear the appearance of honour, or even of common humanity? Or what am I to think of being brought here against my will? I accompanied these words with a look of the utmost contempt. I own, madam, answered Castilio, you have too much reason to be displeased; but my future conduct will, I hope, make you amends for what I have done.

If you are in earnest, Sir, shew me you are, and set me this moment at liberty. That is impossible, madam, to-night; but if you continue in this desire to-morrow you shall go. It is very late, madam; you stand in need of some refreshment and repose; will you give me leave to order some supper to be brought in? I told him I had no appetite; that I wished to go to bed, for that I was indisposed. He then retired, and said he would send Fidelia to attend me. As soon as I was alone, I began to consider what had passed between us; I soon saw how improbable it was that Castilio intended to keep his word with me; for it was not likely that he, who had taken such unlawful means to get me into his power, would so easily part with me again. I doubted not but he had talked in this manner to pacify me for the present. I was cut to the soul, when I reflected that I must remain the whole night under the roof of this wretch. Fidelia came in and brought me

me things to undress me. I put on a night cap ; and I followed her into a room adjoining to that where I was. It was a very handsome bed-chamber, hung with blue and silver damask. As we went in I observed Fidelia turn pale. I asked her the reason ; but she made me a sign, by which I understood that somebody was listening at the door. I imagined Fidelia was privy to some horrid design against me perhaps that very night, and that the knowledge of it had made her on entering the room change colour. I resolved therefore not to go to bed ; I examined the door, and found it had a bolt on the inside ; I made it fast, and seating myself upon a chair, I made Fidelia do the same. When we sat about half an hour (during which time I was agitated by a thousand different horrors) Fidelia in a low voice said, I fancy by this time Castilio thinks you are in bed, and is retired from his lurking place. Ah ! cried I, for heaven's sake tell me what is to happen to me this night ; I am sure you know of some vile intention against me ; for I observed as we came into the room you turned pale. Alas ! madam, said Fidelia, my turning pale had a very different motive : the sight of this room recalled to my remembrance that it had been the scene of my ruin ; It was here I lost my honour, seduced, betrayed, by the vilest of men ; it was here I became a prey to the most

most inhuman artifices. At these words the poor girl burst into tears. Think, Constantia, what I felt when I considered this unhappy creature's distress was only the sad picture of what soon was to be my own. I joined my tears with her's : alas ! said I, when will it please heaven to put an end to my misery ?

I entreated Fidelia to tell me who she was, and how she came into Castilio's hands ? She then informed me, that her father was one of Castilio's tenants ; that he having accidentally seen her one day, had taken a fancy to her, and had persuaded her father to let her come and live with him ; for that he had an excellent house-keeper, under whose care she should be till she knew how to get her bread ; and that he would give me a sum of money to put me into business as soon as I was fit for it. My father, dreading the fatal consequences of my living in this house, refused at first to comply, pretending he could not spare me from home : but Castilio insisted upon it ; and my father did not dare to persist in a denial, lest Castilio, in whose power he was, should turn him out of his farm, and by that means reduce him and his family to poverty and distress. It was this consideration that induced my unhappy father to comply with Castilio's request. Poor man ! he knew not this compliance was to be the cause of

my

my eternal undoing. I was accordingly brought hither and put under the care of this house-keeper, who is perhaps the most abandoned creature that ever disgraced the name of woman.

* She was herself formerly seduced by Castilio, and since that time has been his infamous associate in every crime. No longer able to satisfy his unsatiable desires, she is daily contributing to the destruction of others, as if she imagined she could lessen her own guilt, by drawing in a number to share it. I shall not shock you with an account of all the horrid acts this woman made use of to bring me to her brutal purpose. I was too young and unexperienced not to be soon made a dupe of.

Castilio swore in the most solemn manner to marry me immediately; but no sooner had he obtained what he wanted, than he began to change his language. You may believe, madam, what was my shame and disappointment when I found myself thus imposed upon. I loaded the author of my shame with a thousand reproaches; but they were so far from having any effect upon him, that they served only to amuse him: he wondered at my assurance, he said, to imagine a man of his rank and fortune would marry a poor girl like me; that what had happened to me was the fate of thousands; and that instead of complaining,

I ought

I ought to be very thankful I had met with such good luck. He insisted upon my remaining in the house till he gave me leave to retire. He said if I offered to make my escape he would turn my father out of doors, and throw him into goal for money due to him for rent, where he should remain as long as he lived. I contrived to let my father know what had happened to me, which has almost broke his heart; but he, poor man, dares not complain for fear of this merciless wretch. Castilio has been for some time at London; and I intended to have made my escape, and have prevailed on my father to sell his goods and leave this place; but the vile woman I have mentioned to you has kept so strict a watch over me, that I have not been able to execute my intention. Here Fidelia ceased speaking. I then conjured her to tell me if she was acquainted with his designs upon me. She assured me she was not; but added she feared they were of a very black nature, for that he was incapable of any thing that was generous or honourable. I then gave Fidelia an account of the manner in which he had got me into his power; and conjured her to tell me if there was no possibility for me to make my escape. She told me this would be a very difficult task, as every part of the house was watched by some of his crea-

creatures : she assured me, however, that she would run every risk to serve me. I would advise you, however, to gain time, said she ; and, by seeming to come into his measures, you may probably keep him from coming to extremities for some days, during which time we may probably find out some method to make our escape. Fidelia's words gave me a little ray of hope, I resolved to follow her advice. We must be very careful, said she to conceal our designs ; for if he suspects there is any plot between us, he will immediately remove me from about you, and put you in the hands of his housekeeper. Ah ! replied I, the very sight of her would kill me. She is indeed a very shocking figure, said Fidelia ; but I will not give you a description of of her. You have disagreeable ideas enough without my suggesting new ones to you ; but let me entreat you to take courage : I hope you will yet escape from this detested house.

I embraced Fidelia tenderly ; I began to hope heaven would deliver me from the situation I was in, infinitely worse than any I had ever yet passed through. Fidelia then advised me to go to bed, which I, though almost dying with sleep, was very unwilling to do ; but at last I consented, for Fidelia offered to sit up by me all night.

I was

I was greatly touched at this poor girl's kindness. I had indeed been fortunate in meeting with friends in my greatest distress. I went to bed ; and though tormented by a thousand fears, I at last fell asleep, over-powered by fatigue and vexation. Though it was very late when I went to bed, I waked very early in the morning, and found poor Fidelia, who had sat reading all night by my bed-side. I have never closed my eyes, said she ; but no body has attempted to disturb us. I desired her to lye down and take a little rest, saying I would wake her when it was time to open the door : to this she with some difficulty consented ; I then rose and Fidelia laid down in my place. At nine o'clock I called her up, and we went into the room I had been in the day before.

Fidelia conjured me not to drop a word to Castilio of what she had told me ; for, says she, he threatened to murder me if I revealed any thing that had happened to me.

You need not doubt my prudence, said I. I had hardly spoke these words when Castilio entered the room : the sight of him sickened my soul ; but I resolved to disguise my true sentiments. He asked me how I slept. — Very ill, sir, and yet better than could be expected ; I now claim your promise of setting me free. You are very

pressing to make me miserable, madam : I am likely to suffer sufficiently for my crime, since I am to lose you for ever. Will not the sacrifice give me some title to you ? To my gratitude it will, sir. Is that all I am to hope for, madam ? Is this a time for questions like these ? replied I : ask them me when I am at liberty ; I will then endeavour to answer them in a proper manner. It is enough, madam ; we will quit the subject, if you please, and go to breakfast. Although I had not eat for so long, the presence of this man shocked me so much that I could hardly swallow a mouthful. When breakfast was over he left me, but returned in half an hour. Are you still determined to go, madam ? said he. How can you ask such a question ? replied I. And you really will leave me ? said he, in a tone of voice that plainly shewed he was resolv'd I should not. Ah ! cried I, is this the way of executing your promise ? Fool that I was to give credit to the professions of a man, who, by his behaviour, has forfeited every pretence to honour and justice.

At these words he came up to me, and seizing my hand he attempted to put it to his lips. Can you blame me, madam, if I am loth to part with what is dearer to me than my life ? He then ran on, protesting his love to me, and swearing that he could not live without me. Although I had determined

terminated to conceal my contempt for him, it was not possible to avoid giving him a look of the utmost disdain. How can you imagine, said I, that I can be deceived by what you say? We had a long altercation. He plainly told me, that I must not think of going away; for that the world united should not take me from him. It was in vain for me to represent to him the injustice of what he was doing. Happiness, he said, had always been and ever should be his pursuit; and that he held every means lawful that helped him to attain what he looked upon as the sovereign good. I endeavoured to reason with him, but in vain; he was too hardened to be worked upon by any thing I said. On the contrary, when I had done speaking, he came up to me, and cried out in a kind of transport, Upon my soul, madam, you moralize divinely; but most unfortunately your philosophy serves only to increase what you are labouring to destroy. At these words the monster attempted to kiss me; but I repulsed him with a look that spoke the horror he inspired me with. He was not at all daunted by my manner of treating him. Remember, madam, said he with an air of insolence, that you are in my power; and tremble lest I return your ill treatment. I now began to fear I had gone too far; I softened my manner

manner a little, hoping to appease him. He left me just before dinner, telling me, he expected to find me in a better humour at his return. He was no sooner gone than Fidelia came in to me : I told her what had passed between us ; she blamed me for having treated him so harshly. Take care said she, do not provoke him, lest he throw off all humanity, and proceed to the most brutal extremities. Alas ! answered I, I cannot dissemble my strong aversion to him ; my eyes must betray the sentiments of my heart, whatever endeavours I make to conceal them. Consider, madam, said Fidelia, that your own preservation depends upon it ; if you do not gain time, it will be out of my power to assist you. I promised her I would, in spite of my abhorrence for this wretch, behave to him with more complaisance. Fidelia then informed me, that she had, she believed, met with something, which, beyond her expectations, would contribute towards gaining our liberty. I was standing, continued she, busied in considering how I could serve you, when accidentally casting my eyes towards the window, I observed a small hole in the hanging ; I felt a sudden curiosity, for which I could not account, to look into it. I discovered a little light that came out of a crevice in the wall. I resolved to see from whence this

this proceeded; so taking my pen-knife I gently loosened the hanging, and upon examination I found there was a window which had been shut up. This discovery gave me the utmost joy; but for fear of being observed by any body, I have fastened up the hanging again just as it was. I suppose the window has been shut up to prevent any body's going out at it; but I doubt not but that in a night or two we might loosen the mortar with which it has been plastered up: and if we could get out at it, we may probably get over the garden wall into which it looks; though, continued Fidelia, I know not what will become of us even if we bring this to bear. O, said I, do not fear that; nothing can be so terrible as this detested house: besides, you may go to your father's, and I will commit myself to the mercy of heaven. You can go home with me, replied Fidelia, and my father will find out some proper place to conceal us in; for you may be sure, as soon as we are missed, Castilio will send there to seek us. Ah, Fidelia! cried I, what would have become of me if I had not been with you? Indeed, madam, said the poor girl, I am almost glad I met with my misfortunes, since they may prove a means of saving you from ruin. I then went with her to look at the place I have mentioned

to you ; I found it just as Fidelia had said. I made no doubt but we might in the night with a knife remove the mortar that stopt it up, and get out at it ; but fearing to give suspicion, we returned to the other room, where Fidelia having left me, I threw myself upon my knees, and poured forth the overflowings of a heart penetrated with gratitude at this unexpected good fortune. I am thoroughly convinced, my Constantia, that the Almighty Disposer of all things never abandons his creatures ; and that at the very time we think ourselves forgot by him, he is preparing some hidden mercy for us. I believe nothing can be so pleasing a homage to God, as that perfect acquiescence with his Providence which teaches us always to remember he cannot err ; and that his will is to be adored in whatever shape it appears. You will forgive me these reflections ; they arose naturally to me from the circumstances that lay before me.

I had hardly got off my knees when I heard Castilio's voice upon the stairs, ordering the servants to come and lay the cloth. As I had hopes of being soon out of his power, I found less difficulty in bearing his presence. I received him with more complaisance than usual. This I saw gave him the utmost satisfaction, as he imagined I should soon be brought into his measures.

He

He made me a thousand extravagant compliments on my beauty, and swore many dreadful oaths to convince me of the sincerity of his passion : I suffered all this as well as I could. When dinner came in he ordered the servants to withdraw. We had a long conversation. I easily discovered Castilio had a great understanding, without one grain of honour or humanity in his disposition. He threw the discourse upon matrimony. He could not conceive, he said, why people of sense should submit to form and ceremonies, fit only for the vulgar, and a trick invented by the priests to fetter mankind, and make a slavery of what nature intended should be a state of absolute freedom. He made use of all the common arguments that serve to support such infamous doctrines. He took an occasion to hint to me, that he was determined to make use of the opportunity which my being in his power gave him. Notwithstanding my resolution, I could not keep my temper at so open an avowal of his infamous designs upon me. The treatment I have already met with, sir, said I, might have prepared me for this ; but I was willing to doubt whether there existed a man so totally lost to every sense of goodness as you seem to be. Is this then your boasted regard for me ? are these unmanly insults the proofs of your affection ? But do not flatter yourself,

self, continued I, in a calm tone of voice, that you have to deal with a person whom you can ever reduce to submit to your horrid intentions: I know your meaning, I am prepared for your brutality; but the very moment you attempt to exercise it upon me, I shall make use of the only means left me to free myself from your detested power. I spoke these words in so resolved a manner, that Castilio seemed amazed at me; but as he had no opinion of a woman's courage, he thought it was only a trick to frighten him. How can you, said he, accuse me of want of generosity, when I am endeavouring to obtain by gentleness and persuasion what I might take by force? At these words I could no longer contain myself. Good God! said I, shedding tears, why was I given up to this wretch's power? O Horatio! cried I, in an agony of grief, couldst thou know at this moment what thy Sophia suffers! Castilio was not at all moved by my behaviour. I no longer wonder, madam, at your aversion for me; your affections have been given to this happy Horatio. Ah! cried I, hardly knowing what I said, had he been now alive, I had not been thus shamefully exposed to your cruel treatment. The wretch now began to soften his manners a little. Be assured, madam, said he, I shall not proceed to violence, unless you oblige
me

me to it by an obstinate refusal. You must not however be deceived, as that can be of no use either to me or you: I love you; you are in my power; I cannot think of marrying you, as I am determined never to be made a slave of: if you will consent to make me happy, my whole fortune shall be your's; if you desire it you shall take my name and appear to the world as my wife; can I do more? Does not this complaisance give me a title to a little from you? I will for your sake submit to wear the name of husband, a name for which I have the greatest abhorrence: thus you see I am anxious about your reputation as you can be. For heaven's sake, continued he, only consent to blefs me at last, and you shall have as much time as you can ask. These last words gave me some hope: I made a strong effort to keep down the indignation my soul swelled with. Well, sir, I cannot answer what time may bring about: but you cannot suppose it will be very easy for me to consent to what my soul loaths the idea of. Here the detested villain attempted to catch me in his arms. How I adore you, my angel for this goodness, said he, in a manner that expressed a passion I could have died to know myself the object of! In spite of my struggles the wretch forced a kiss from me. At last I prevailed upon him to withdraw. I thought myself con-

contaminated by his touch; and determined never again to bear such liberties: my delicacy represented them to me as little inferior to prostitution. Fidelia came in to me; I told her what had passed. O! says she, we must be as expeditious as possible; Castilio's impatience will soon overcome every other consideration, and a day or two more may complete your ruin. Well, said I, we must see what we can do; if we do not succeed in this attempt, there remains one more in which I cannot fail. Ah! madam, said Fidelia, I hope you will never be reduced to this dreadful expedient. I then asked Fidelia if there was no way to avoid seeing Castilio again to-night; I could not support the thoughts of being again exposed to his detestable familiarities. Suppose, said I, I send him word I am not well, and beg he will not come to me any more this evening. I will try, said she, but I question whether he will be satisfied with this excuse. She then went with my message to Castilio: he sent me word, that if I was indisposed I ought by no means to be alone; so I found myself condemned to see him again: but I hoped, that, by pretending to be in pain, I might induce him to shorten his visit, and avoid any rudeness from him. I received him very patiently. He affected to be very much concerned at my illness, and made his visit shorter even than I expected. I waited

waited some time with the utmost impatience to see Fidelia, that we might begin to put our schemes in practice; but it grew late before she came. I at last began to fear that Castilio had forbid her to return; and that perhaps I was to be delivered into the hands of the greatly dreaded house-keeper. It is not in my power to paint to you what terror that imagination struck me with. At last however Fidelia appeared, and removed my apprehensions. Good God! said I, what has kept you from me? Indeed, answered she, I imagined you would be uneasy at my long stay; but Castilio sent for me into his apartment, and questioned me very severely whether I had revealed to you my misfortunes. I persisted in saying I had not; he threatened to use me with the utmost cruelty if I did. He ordered me to make use of every method, to bring you to consent to his desires as soon as possible; and says, if I succeed, he will give me my liberty, and money enough to keep me and my family all my life. I seemed very thankful for his goodness, and promised him I would do whatever was in my power. He then thinking me intirely in his interest, asked me whether I thought you was really ill? or whether, as he imagined, it was only a pretence to avoid his presence? I assured him you was indisposed; he seemed concerned, and ordered me to

come

come and sit up all night with you. When Fidelia told me this, we went into my bed-chamber; where, after having fastened the door, Fidelia produced a large knife she had procured, and we went to work. We found it would be a very difficult task to remove the mortar, which was extremely hard. We worked however the whole night long by turns, and in the morning we had made a considerable progress. We agreed that I should continue indisposed, but by no means keep my bed; for, said Fidelia, Castilio would be always by your bed side, and as you know him this must be very disagreeable. When he came to see me, I told him I was rather better than the evening before. I shall not tire you, my Constantia, with a repetition of our discourse, which tended plainly to shew me his eagerness and impatience for my ruin, or of the artifices I made use of to keep him in patience. He never left me the whole day, which was a most insupportable restraint upon me. When he took his leave at night, he had the cruelty to tell me, that I must not keep him much longer in suspence, but by a speedy compliance escape a gentle compulsion, as he termed it. Fidelia came to me as usual; she prevailed upon me to go to bed, and let her work alone till four o'clock, at which hour she promised to call me, she said she had slept in the day, and

and was better able than I was to support the want of rest.

I went to bed, and at the appointed hour when I arose, Fidelia told me she had met with a terrible difficulty. She had removed great part of the mortar, but she found there was a large bar of iron that went across and prevented any one's going out at it, and which we had not strength enough to cut in two, or remove. This vexed us extremely; however, we determined to do our utmost, rather than abandon ourselves to despair. We continued with unceasing labour to work at it till morning, when we found, to our great mortification, we had not the least prospect of removing the bar of iron. We were obliged however to leave off. We put the hangings up in their former situation; so that no body could perceive what we had been about. We resolved to renew our attempt with double ardour the succeeding night.

I had almost forgot, my dear Constantia, that I am writing a letter, not a volume, will not add to the bulk of this long epistle by any unnecessary apologies for it.

I am ever sincerely
and affectionately yours,
SOPHIA
LETTER.

LETTER IV.

I shall resume, my dear Constantia, the thread of my history without interruption. I was obliged again to bear the sight of Castilio; his behaviour grew worse and worse. He began to throw off even those appearances he had yet preserved: he said he saw I intended to trifle with him, but that he would only allow me one night more to consider of it; and that, if I did not the next day consent to what he wished, he would make use of a treatment very different from what I had hitherto met with. I in vain endeavoured to prevail upon him, by every persuasive argument, to grant me a few days longer; tears, prayers, intreaties were all ineffectual! He was deaf to every thing but his own brutal appetites. I longed impatiently for night, that I might be delivered from his hated presence.

Fidelia and I renewed our labour, which we continued without interruption all night, but to no purpose: the bar of iron was immovable; and at six in the morning, I had the unspeakable grief to find, that we had not the most distant prospect of success. I had now lost all the hopes that had hitherto supported me. Ah! Fidelia, said I, it is in vain. Every method of escaping but by death is denied me. The poor girl tried to encourage me: we shall have better success

cess to-morrow night, said she. Alas! cried I, Castilio will never wait till then: however, said Eidelia, it is but a trial; come, madam, do not lose all your hopes. I made her no answer; I regarded myself as condemned to death, and resolved to meet my fate with constancy.

The hated Castilio renewed his unmanly treatment. He swore by heaven, he would no longer be imposed upon. Prepare, said he, in a menacing voice, to receive me this night to your bed; for may eternal perdition seize me, (that was his horrid expression) if I allow you another night; you abuse my complaisance, but I will no longer be trifled with. Having said this, the inhuman monster left me.

I threw myself upon the floor, and gave myself up to the most agonizing despair: I tore my hair, and bathed the earth with my tears. I now saw the fatal hour approach, when death or infamy must be my portion. I lay some minutes in this situation; then summoning all my resolution to my assistance, I reproached myself severely for my want of courage. What, thought I, do I hesitate between death and dishonour! I threw myself upon my knees, and poured out the bitterness of my anguish to heaven, resolving to die at once, and by that means relieve myself from the horrors that surrounded me.

Whilst I was in this attitude, Fidelia entered the room. Alas! madam, said she, what means this posture? O, Fidelia, replied I, there are no hopes left me; Castilio has refused to give me any more time: this very night my honour must be sacrificed, unless I do something to prevent it. I spoke this in such a manner, as plainly shewed the resolution I had formed. The poor girl, with tears in her eyes, conjured me not to think of executing my terrible purpose, till she had tried whether it was not possible to prevail upon Castilio to grant me another night.

I told her I was certain she would not be able to move this hard-hearted man; but she insisted upon making the trial. She then left me, and I waited her return without any kind of hopes. She came back in a quarter of an hour; I perceived by her countenance she brought favourable news. I have gained my point, said she; I have given Castilio such a description of your situation, that I have at last prevailed upon him to grant you till to-morrow night. I told him the extreme agitation you had undergone would certainly hurt your health; he has promised not to disturb you any more to night; but bid me tell you, that he hopes you will make him amends for his complaisance to-morrow, by receiving him more favourably than you have hitherto done;

done: however, added Fidelia, I trust in God we shall get out of his power before that time; for I have a secret foreboding, that we shall have better success to-night than we have yet met with. Fidelia and I then went once more to work; we continued without ceasing for many hours, till at last we perceived some bricks, which fastened the iron bar in the wall, began to give way: this gave us fresh hopes and strength. I took the knife; and setting the point of it against the bricks that were already loose, I gave such violent and repeated pushes, as in a little time brought them from their place, and to our unspeakable joy I pulled out the bar of iron. This done, we cleared away all the mortar and rubbish, and found the window was just wide enough to allow us to get out at it. The moon shone very bright; and Fidelia and I, recommending ourselves to heaven, got down by this means into the garden. We found there was no way of getting out of it, but by climbing over a very high wall which overlooked the high road: this we were not likely to do without the utmost danger; but we had gone too far to be afraid of anything. I got to the top of the wall first, by the assistance of a large tree, the branches of which extended themselves near enough for me to step from them on to the wall, which was very broad. I called, Fidelia

delia to follow me, which she prepared to do; but most unfortunately, when she had just got to the top of the tree, the branches on which she stood gave way and she fell backwards. I was shocked beyond imagination; I asked her if she was hurt. Alas! said she, in a feeble voice, I have, I believe, broke my leg, for I cannot rise; make haste, continued she, save yourself and leave me to my fate; I shall die in peace, since I have been a means of preserving your life and honour. My heart bled within me to see the poor creature, to whom I owed so much, in such a condition. I determined not to leave her; and was preparing to get back again, when I observed some people in the garden, and heard Castilio's voice crying, This way, this way! This, you may believe, threw me into a terrible fright; I knew I could be of no service to Fidelia, and therefore resolved to get away as fast as I could. It happened very luckily for me, that the road was upon an ascent, otherwise I should have endangered my neck in getting down on the other side; I jumped to the ground, however, without receiving any harm. The fear of being pursued by Castilio made me walk as fast as I possibly could, though I knew not where I was going. It was near five o'clock in the morning; I wandered a long while uncertain where to direct my steps, and trembling

bling at every noise I heard, lest my pursuers were at my heels. I went on in this manner, till chance conducted my steps into a little bye-path, which led into a large field. Being quite overcome with fatigue, I sat myself down upon the grass, and began to consider what would become of me; for I was intirely unacquainted with what part of the country I was in. When I reflected upon Fidelia's misfortune, of which I was the unhappy cause, I began to look upon myself as a wretch, born not only to be miserable myself, but to make every one so who had any thing to do with me. I wept bitterly. O my God! cried I, when will it please thee to shew mercy to thy creature? Indeed, Constantia, any heart, however hard, must have melted at the sight of my distress. I endeavoured to rise in order to go on, but I had not strength to stand; so sitting down again, I cried out in the anguish of my soul, I may as well die here; any place may serve as a grave for a wretch who will soon be at peace. I spoke these words aloud; and my strength failing me quite, I laid down upon the grass, fully persuaded I was now going to eternal peace: but heaven decreed it otherwise.

A poor shepherd, who was working in the field, having heard me speak in this manner, concluded I was out of my senses; and coming up to me, he stood looking at me

me a few moments with the utmost astonishment. He asked me who I was, and what was the matter? Ah! said I, it does not signify who I am; but for the love of heaven give me your hand, and lead me to some place where I may die in peace. God forbid! said the old man, such a pretty maiden should die. Come, said he, I will carry you to my house, and my wife shall see what she can do for you. At these words he offered me his hand; but finding me very weak he took me in his arms, and in that manner carried me to his house, or rather cottage, which stood at the end of the field. The shepherd told his wife how he had met with me, and desired her to take care of me; for, says he, I am afraid the poor young lady is a little out of her mind. Ill as I was I could not help smiling at this idea, which was indeed very natural. His wife seemed much concerned to see me so bad, as she said, and proposed warming their own bed and putting me into it. I readily agreed to this. As soon as I was in bed I grew better; I asked the old woman if she had ever heard of such a man as Castilio. Ay, madam, too often, said she; he is the terror of all the poor folks who have daughters. I then told her I had been in his power, and how I had escaped; I expressed some fears lest he should send to seek me there; but the good woman assured me he

he would never take it into his head I was with them : she desired me to try to sleep ; for that I was very safe with them, and should stay as long as I pleased.

O Constantia ! how the different circumstances we find ourselves in, change the appearances of things ! This cottage seemed to me a kind of heaven, and the poor shepherd and his wife like my guardian angels.

I fell into a sweet sleep, and did not wake till very late in the evening ; I found my kind hosts sitting in the room by a good fire, which they had made while I was asleep, for fear I should catch cold.

As soon as they perceived I was awake, they both very tenderly enquired how I did. I assured them I found myself much better. The old man then told me that they had just got their supper ready ; and though it was a very homely one, I should be welcome to share it with them. I thanked them very kindly, and willingly accepted their offer. I rose and we went to supper, which consisted of some new-laid eggs and a syllabub. I do not remember I ever supped so well in my life : I have often thought of this scene since. O Constantia ! how much happier were these poor people in their cottage, than the wicked great man in his palace, though surrounded with all the pomp of human grandeur !

I was

I was greatly pleased with the simplicity and honesty of these poor people: they were to me a new species of creatures. All the vices and arts which the world abounds with they were ignorant of. Surely, Constantia, these people are to be envied.

When supper was ended, Martha, for so I heard the old man call his wife, began to consider what she should do for a bed for me, as they had only one. She said she had a feather bed and some blankets in the house, and that she could easily put up another. I then begged her to give me pen and paper, that I might write to Mrs. Williams. Perhaps, my Constantia, you wonder I did not think of doing this before; but Fidelia had assured me it was not in her power to convey a letter for me to the post; and I could not think of trusting any of Castilio's servants with it, for they would certainly have given it to their master.

Very luckily for me my host could write, otherwise I should have been at a sad loss for the materials I wanted.

I wrote to Mrs. Williams a particular account of all I had suffered; and told the reason of my not having done it sooner. I conjured her to let me hear from her directly; and begged she would send me word in what manner it would be safest for me to come to London, for that I should set out the moment I heard from her. When I
had

had finished my letter, and recommended it to the care of my host, I went to bed. I did not sleep much; a thousand various ideas presented themselves to me: when I considered how many strange turns of fortune I had undergone, I could not help entertaining a hope that there was something good reserved for me, though I had a very narrow prospect before me. I was greatly distressed when I reflected on the sad accident that had happened to Fidelia: I knew myself the cause of it, and this knowledge gave me inexpressible anxiety.

I rose about eight o'clock. My hosts had been up a great while, and Martha had milked her cows. We all three sat down to breakfast upon some new milk, and a sort of little cakes which Martha had made with cream and butter, and which were very good. The good couple seemed greatly delighted with my company; nor was I less so with theirs: the native innocence of their manners filled me with a satisfaction I had never felt: theirs was nature in its uncorrupted state. After breakfast they each went to their respective employments; Martha's consisted in making butter and setting her milk, and her husband's in looking after the field in which his house stood. Our cottage consisted of three small rooms; the neatness of them made more than amends for their size and plainness.

There

There was a small garden, which supplied them in winter with cabbages and other vegetables, and in summer with fruit of different kinds. I waited very impatiently for a letter from Mrs. Williams; but ten days were past since I had wrote to her and received none. I imagined my letter had miscarried, and wrote a second; but no answer came to this, nor to a third, which I wrote about three weeks after.

I was now alarmed. I concluded my friend was dead, or that some accident had befallen her which had prevented her getting my letters. I could by no other means account for her strange silence, as I could not admit a doubt of her friendship for me. Abstracted from the regard I had for Mrs. Williams, I had the utmost reason to dread the loss of her: for what was to become of me? The wide world lay before me, without the least prospect of my finding either money or friend in it. Alas! thought I, I have only escaped from one distress to fall into another: yet, when I considered from what distress I had escaped, I regarded every other as inconsiderable. I made no secret of my uneasiness to my good benefactors.

They endeavoured all they could to make me easy, and assured me I might command every thing in their power: I was somewhat comforted with the professions of friendship they

made me. Their goodness almost reconciled me to human nature, which my acquaintance with the wretched Castilio had taught me to have a kind of contempt for.

One evening, as we were sitting at supper, the old man, after some hesitation, spoke to me in the following terms : I am greatly surprised and concerned at your never having received any answer from your friend in London ; I would not however, have you vex yourself so much about it. I am going to make you a proposal, which, if you consent to, will be a great satisfaction both to my wife and me : we have no children : we have lived here above thirty years, and have by our honest industry got together as much money as will keep us and you as long as we live. My wife says she loves you as well as if you was her own child, and I am sure I do the same. If you can but content yourself with our way of life, you shall never want for any thing ; you may stay with us as long as we live, and at our death you shall have all we have : I do not understand, continued the old man, how to put my expressions into fine language, but my heart is in my words ; and your consenting to this request of ours will make us as happy as any thing in this world can do.

Here Martha joined her husband, and said every thing in her honest manner to
persuade

persuade me how much she loved me ; and how happy and honoured they should think themselves by my living with them. These poor people's goodness filled my heart with a painful pleasure. Is it possible, said I, that virtue should have left the world, to dwell in cottages ?

I could not doubt of the sincerity of the old man and his wife. I accepted their kind offers ; and resolved never again to go forth among mankind, but to live for ever here, where peace and virtue dwelt without disturbance.

I cannot describe to you, my Constantia, how happy my new friends were in my consenting to stay with them. I very soon grew perfectly pleased with my situation. I used to spend great part of my time in making little flowers with shells, and other materials, which the good shepherd supplied me with : I now thought myself very happy. Stranger either to the hope or fear that agitate the human mind in the various scenes through which it passes, my whole soul was calm and tranquil : a peaceful serenity diffused itself through the mind.

When I thought on what had happened to me, it was only as the sailor, who, having escaped the horrors of a tempest, stands on the shore contemplating the danger he no longer fears. I lived in this peaceful situation near ten months : I fondly imagined

I was

I was here to end my life. O Constantia, to how different a fate was I reserved !

I used generally every evening to take a walk in our field, from whence I commonly returned about eight o'clock : but it happened one night I staid out longer than usual ; I had fallen into a train of ideas that insensibly led me on, till perceiving the twilight had spread itself through the heavens I returned home, where I found the old man in the utmost distress. Martha was lying speechless by the fire-side. I was shocked at this sight ; and enquiring what was the matter, the shepherd told me she had been milking her cows, and one of them, being a little unruly, had given her a violent blow on the head ; that he being at work hard by, heard her cry out, and coming up to her, she just told him what was the matter and had not spoke since. We rubbed her temples, and in about an hour she came to herself : she fell, however, into a violent fever, and died the next morning. The poor man was in the utmost distress ; and indeed I was greatly grieved for the death of this good creature.

About a week after Martha's death, her husband took it into his head, he would stay no longer in a place where every thing brought her continually to his mind. He determined to go to London, where he had

a nephew in business. When he first proposed this to me I refused to go with him, resolving to stay behind him, and live alone in the cottage. But the old man represented to me, that I should not be so safe as when we were all together ; and that if the people round about heard a young woman lived there alone, it would draw their curiosity, and I should be in danger of being forced from my retreat. I felt all the power of his argument, and consented to go to town again, though I was very loth to leave my beloved solitude.

The old shepherd disposed of all his goods, and let the little house to a farmer's son, who was going to set up a farm of his own. He then hired a post-chaise for me, and a horse for himself, and in this manner we travelled up to London.

I went with the old man to his nephew's house, uncertain what was to be my destiny. The first thing I did was to enquire after Mrs. Williams. I went to the house where we lived when I was with her ; but, upon my asking for her, I was told she had left it some time since, and that they did not know where she was gone. I no longer wondered I had never heard from her. I did not know what way to take, in order to find her out. I had not yet got the better of my fears, of being seized by some of Castilio's creatures : I trembled when I walked

walked the streets, and imagined every one I saw was going to lay hold on me. I resolved to go to Juliet's cousin, in hopes of meeting with her, and, through her means, find out Mrs. Williams; but, when I got there, the man told me Juliet was many miles out of town, at a place she had got in the country, and that he had not heard from her for some time.

I was now in the utmost perplexity. The old Shepherd, who was the only friend I had in the world, was taken ill, and died about three weeks after he came to London. At his death he gave me all he had in the world, which consisted of about fifty pounds. I continued to live in the house of his nephew, who let his first floor, which I took.

I formed a resolution to go into service, as soon as I could hear of a proper place for me to go to. I wrote to Juliet, acquainting her with what had happened to me; and desired her to send me word if she knew any thing of Mrs. Williams. She sent me an answer, expressing her sorrow for my misfortunes; she told me she knew nothing of Mrs. Williams, to whom she had wrote, but that she never received any answer. She concluded her letter by telling me, that if she could be of any use to me, she would leave her place and come to town. I sent her word I had no occasion for her, resolving not to take the poor girl from her place. I
I 3 spoke

spoke to the man with whom I lodged, to enquire for a place for me to wait upon a lady, for which I thought myself tolerably qualified; because, during my stay with Mrs. Williams, I had learnt to do fine work and get up fine linen.

I often regretted my cottage; I foresaw I had many difficulties yet to struggle with: but good heaven! how little did I expect the strange event I soon met with.

I remained six weeks before I heard of any place fit for me to enquire after. At last the man with whom I lodged informed me, that he knew a married lady who wanted a genteel young woman to be her own maid. I was very glad to hear of this, and determined to go the next day and see the lady. I had always avoided going late out in the evening, for I still dreaded the vile Castilio. But, O Constantia! what precautions can guard us from treachery like his?

I went about one in the morning to the lady's house I have mentioned: she was not at home; so I left word I would call again the next day. As I was returning to my lodgings I was stopt by an ill-looking fellow who told me I was his prisoner. Judge my surprize at this. Your prisoner! said I, what do you mean? I mean what I say, replied the fellow surlily; I have a writ for a debt against you. I told the man he must certainly have mistaken me for some other, for that

that I did not owe a farthing to any body. He assured me I was the person ; and that I was arrested at Castilio's suit for a hundred pounds. Good God ! cried I, is it possible. He then shewed me his writ, and likewise a bond signed by my own name, acknowledging that I was indebted to him the aforesaid sum. Never was astonishment equal I believe to mine, when I beheld this unparalleled piece of villainy. I now recollect little circumstance which had quite escaped my memory, and which, I believe, I mentioned to you in a former letter. You may remember, that I told you when Castilio came to Mrs. Williams's house, he had taken up a piece of paper in which I recollect to have written my name, one day as I was trying a new pen. The wretch had made use of this trifling incident, to form this horrid contrivance against me. I told the bailiff this was all a forgery, and refused to go with him. He said I must, or else he should force me. The horror I had of falling again into Castilio's hands, made me resolve to run every risk rather than go with this fellow : finding I persisted in not going with him, he began to lay violent hands upon me. I called out for help, to rescue me from the hands of my destroyers ; the mob soon gathered round us, and took my part, when several sturdy fellows came up, and asked them how they dared meddle with

with a prisoner? and that whoever undertook to defend me must go in my place. At these words the mob began to retire; and I was just going to be delivered up to the power of these barbarous wretches, when a gentleman, who was going by in his chariot, stopt and enquired what was the meaning of the noise he heard? His servants told him, it was a young woman whom the bailiffs were carrying to prison. He immediately jumped out of his chariot, and coming up to us, asked one of the fellows what was the matter, and who they were treating so rudely? At these words, not knowing what I did, I fell upon my knees to the gentleman, and with tears intreated him to deliver me from these monsters. He stood a moment gazing upon me with looks that expressed the utmost surprise and concern; then offering me his hand, You are safe, madam, said he; if any of those villains approach you, this moment is their last. What are your demands upon this lady? said he, turning sternly to the bailiff. I have a bond against her for a hundred pounds, said the rascal, and she must either pay it or go with me. Take your money, replied the gentleman, giving him a bank bill from his pocket, and be gone this moment. The fellow made some hesitation; but seeing my protector lay his hand upon his sword with a fierce air, he thought fit to walk off: then turning

turning to me, he begged I would not remain a moment in the street, but give him leave to set me down in his chariot. The fright I had been in, the unexpected deliverance I had met with, worked so forcibly upon my spirits, that, unable to speak, I burst into tears, and fainted in the arms of my unknown protector.

I did not come to myself till we stopt at Dorimont's house, for thus this gentleman was called. I no sooner opened my eyes than he said to me, Forgive me, madam, if I have presumed to bring you to my house; your illness prevented your telling me where you lived: but if you will be so good as to go in a moment to recover your spirits, my chariot shall attend you wherever you please. He spoke these words with an air so full of respect and politeness, that I could by no means refuse to comply with this request. I went up stairs, and was led into a very handsome apartment. Dorimont entreated me to take a little hartshorn and water; which I did. I own to you I could not help trembling, lest in Dorimont I should find a second Castilio. I sat about a quarter of an hour; Dorimont hardly spoke a word, except to ask me how I did. He seemed buried in a profound meditation. His eyes were fixed to the ground; nor did I perceive they were ever once cast upon

upon me. I will here give you a description of him.

He was tall, rather above the middle stature. His person had an air of native dignity, which I hardly ever saw equalled in any figure; his eyes were a fine hazel, but there was something in the look of them which I cannot find any expression proper to convey to you an idea of; it was a gentle lustre mixed with the most inexpressible sweetness; his features were all put together with the utmost proportion; an air of truth and benevolence, joined to the most unaffected modesty was visible in his manners and behaviour.

When I had sat some time I found myself pretty well recovered. Dorimont perceiving by my looks that I wanted to be gone, was going to order his chariot, but I told him I had rather walk; for I was apprehensive that the people where I lodged might form strange conjectures at seeing me come home in that manner. He asked me, with an air of timidity, whether he might conduct me home, lest I should meet with any fresh assault. To this I could not avoid consenting. He walked with me to my lodgings; we did not exchange ten words as we went along. When we came to the door he offered to take his leave, with a look that spoke the utmost agitation. I was too sensible of what I owed him not to ask him

to

to go in with me ; but he politely excused himself, saying, the fright I had undergone, made it necessary for me to take some rest ; but that since I gave him leave, he would wait upon me the next day.

As soon as I got into my own apartment, I began to ruminate upon this strange adventure : heaven, thought I, surely sent this generous man to my assistance. When I reflected on his behaviour, I found something so noble in it, that, as I was naturally both grateful and unreserved, I felt already a kind of confidence in him, which perhaps, considering what I had met with from Castilio, was a mark rather of my own frankness and credulity than of my judgment. I was not, however, deceived this time ; for never surely was there a mind so truly noble as Dorimont's.

The next day I waited impatiently to see Dorimont. I resolved to let him know who I was, and how I came into the situation from which he had relieved me. He came about one o'clock. I no sooner saw him, than going to him almost involuntarily, Ah ! Sir, said I, I began to fear you would not come. As I spoke these words, I observed an air of joy spread itself over his countenance. After we had sat some time together, I told him the generous treatment I had received from him, gave him a title to my utmost gratitude and confidence : I then related

related to him without reserve every circumstance of my life. Whilst I was speaking, I remarked several different changes in his countenance: when I described to him the agonies I suffered for the loss of my dear Horatio, a deep concern took possession of his features; when I came to my adventure with Castilio, his eyes shot forth rays of indignation: he could with difficulty contain his rage; and every now and then crying out, infamous wretch! is it possible there should exist so execrable a being?

When I had done speaking, he came up to me with an air of respectful tenderness, — The confidence you have put in me, madam, said he, is an obligation I can never repay; the whole study of my life shall be to shew you I am not unworthy of it: and though you have the utmost reason to think ill of our sex, I do not despair of convincing you, there are men not undeserving your esteem. After this we had a long conversation. There was something so uncommonly elevated in Dorimont's ideas, that I from that instant conceived an esteem for him, which I shall carry to the grave with me. His words, his looks, his actions, were so chastened, so innately pure, that one might discover untainted honour and delicacy in every part of his conversation.

When he went away, I did not let him ask leave to come again; I desired him to repeat

repeat his visits as often as was agreeable to him.

You will perhaps, my dear Constantia, think me very imprudent, in thus trusting a man I knew so little of; but there was something in Dorimont's behaviour, that carried with it the most irresistible persuasion: besides, could I give too many marks of gratitude to a man who had delivered me from the hands of wretches bent upon my destruction?

Do not you think, my dear Constantia, it is time to end this letter? I will only add that I am

most faithfully yours,

SOPHIA.

DORIMONT

LETTER V.

I Doubt not but my Constantia is desirous of hearing, by what unexpected turn of fortune I was brought into the situation in which she first knew me. If what you have already read appears extraordinary or interesting to you, how much more will what I am going to relate appear so!

The next morning, when I rose, the maid of the house gave me a letter from Dorimont, in which I found a bank-bill of a thousand pounds, and these words:

The respect with which you have inspired
K

' spired me, madam, makes me tremble,
' lest the liberty I have taken should offend
' that delicacy which distinguishes you from
' the generality of women : but it is from
' that very delicacy I hope to obtain my
' pardon. ' Your own sentiments on these
' heads will teach you in what manner to
' look upon what I am doing. You can
' conceive it is possible to do certain things
' without any other motive than the plea-
' sure which arises from the consciousness of
' having done them.

I am, Madam,
with the utmost respect,
your most obedient
humble servant,
DORIMONT.

This action of Dorimont's filled me with the highest sense of his generosity : but a painful sensation suggested itself to me. I was unavoidably laid under obligations to Dorimont, which I had no prospect of repaying him. I had reason to believe he was a man of the strictest honour and delicacy ; but, my Constantia, he was a man, and as such, liable to the frailties and passions, which are inseparable from humanity. Dorimont's behaviour to me gave me room to apprehend I was not indifferent to him. As I was resolved never to marry any man, since I had lost my dear Horatio, I foresaw,

if

if this was the case, I should be thrown into the utmost perplexity. I persuaded myself, from what I knew of Dorimont, that he was capable of friendship, independent of every other passion. I have since found, that this is hardly possible ; since Dorimont, whose soul was a stranger to every selfish-view, could hardly rise to this arduous task. I did not see Dorimont for some days : I attributed his absence to the excess of his delicacy. He was so apprehensive of appearing to presume upon the obligations I had to him, that he expressly staid from me longer than usual.

He came in about a week. As soon as he entered the room, I told him I had great reason to complain of him. What have I done, Madam ? said he, with a look of fear. You have too long, replied I, denied me the pleasure of pouring out my acknowledgments. Ah ? Madam, said he, if you do not indeed mean to punish me, you will forbear a language like this. Well, answered I; Dorimont, you shall be satisfied, though I lose the pleasure (which, to a heart like mine, is the greatest it can feel) of expressing to you the overflowings of a soul unacquainted with art, and filled with the lively sense of your generosity.

Dorimont staid with me till the evening ; but, as his delicacy was ever attentive not to wound mine, he always retired pretty

early. One morning, as I was standing at the window, expecting Dorimont, I saw Mrs. Williams go by. I threw up the window, and called to her: she run up stairs in a transport of joy, catched me in her arms; Is it possible, said she, that I embrace again my dearest child? I cannot tell you, my dearest Constantia, what pleasure this happy meeting with a friend so dear to me as Mrs. Williams, gave me. I asked her what was the meaning of my never having heard from her? She told me she had left her house soon after I was taken from her; but she had begged the people who took it, to send her any letters that came there directed for her; but added, she supposed they had forgot it. I then gave her an account of all that had happened to me. She shed tears at many parts of my relation. Ah! said she, you can never know how many racking hours you have cost me.

Mrs. Williams was extremely charmed at the account I gave her of Dorimont. We had hardly ended our discourse when he came in. I presented my friend to him; Behold, said I, another of my benefactors. How happy am I in having two such! Dorimont saluted Mrs. Williams with the most polite address, and we spent the evening in the most delightful manner imaginable. We agreed that I should the next day quit my lodgings and go with Mrs. Williams to

her

her house. Dorimont and she parted equally pleased with each other; he with her good sense, and she with his exalted generosity. When he was gone, my dear Sophia, said she, this is an angel instead of a man. He is indeed, replied I. She then asked me, if I did not imagine Dorimont loved me? I told her I hoped his sentiments for me went no farther than friendship. Do not deceive yourself, my dear, said Mrs. Williams, it is no easy task to separate love from friendship; nor do I, said she, in the present case, see why you should wish it. I owned to her, that, had my heart been untouched, its utmost wishes would have been satisfied in a lover like Dorimont: but I had taken an unalterable resolution never to marry; this, continued I, is a tribute I owe to my adored Horatio, whose beloved image reigns for ever in my heart; and this resolution no power on earth can ever shake. Dorimont is capable of every thing uncommonly great; if he thinks of me in the manner I fear he does, I will acquaint him with my resolution, which he, from the unbounded generosity of his own mind, must approve though it be inconsistent with his own inclinations. Well, my dear child, said Mrs. Williams, I wish you may bring this about. I have as high an opinion of Dorimont as you can have; yet this is a task I fear he will be unequal to.

After I had talked some time, I paid off my lodgings, and went with Mrs. Williams to her house. She told me that a relation of her husband's had died since we had parted, and had left her a hundred pounds a year for her life, which she said, was sufficient for her to live upon, and that she had quitted her business; and since you are determined never to marry, added she, we may live together, for I trust in heaven, no cruel accident will ever again separate us.

I am certain, my dear Constantia, you are greatly pleased at finding me once again restored to happiness; but you will be still more so, when you will find that happiness exalted into the highest degree of bliss that we can taste in this lower world, and which, I think, were it eternalized, could only be exceeded by the joys of the next.

Several days past, and I neither heard from, nor saw, Dorimont. I knew not how to account for his absence. I resolved to send and enquire after him; but as I was giving my orders to a servant, I heard a loud rap at the door, and looking out, I saw Dorimont's chariot. When he entered the room, I was struck with the graceful elegance of his figure. He approached me with a look of inexpressible respect and tenderness, in which there was mixed an air of agitation. O Sophia, said he, in a trembling voice, I am going, perhaps, in this

moment, to forfeit all that esteem with which you have hitherto honoured me, and without which I would not live a moment---Here he paused, and fixed his eyes upon the ground, he remained a few moments in silence---I knew but too well what he meant---I had no power to open my lips : I was seized with an emotion of mingled fear, reverence, and pity. At length Dorimont broke this strange silence, which, I think, is amongst the most painful intervals I ever spent. Do not imagine, Sophia, continued he, mine is a heart capable of a thought that borders upon self-interest. The secret I am now going to disclose to you, I resolved to bury eternally in my bosom ; but I find it impossible to keep my resolution, and live---O Sophia, (taking my hand, which I had not power to withdraw) I adore you, with a passion the most disinterestedly tender, that ever warmed the soul of man ! At these words he stopped, and lifted his eyes with a timorous air to mine---My confusion and anxiety did not allow me to speak : A tear started involuntarily into my eye. What do I see ! cried Dorimont, with a look of inexpressible anguish---Is it then the knowledge of my affection for you, which causes that appearance of grief ? O Sophia ! you do not yet know the heart of Dorimont. Let what I am going to say, continued he, in a low voice, convince you of its sentiments.

You

You have a soul void of every female art; I shall therefore pour out mine before you without disguise.

I love you, Sophia; you have loved: let what you felt for Horatio teach you at this moment what I feel. Think not, however, I would take this hand, greatly as it is adored, unless with it I could have your heart; your whole heart, with all its tenderness, undividedly mine. I see your noble, your generous struggle.—Horatio's image still keeps possession of your soul: You are unwilling to tell me so; but that starting tear speaks for you. You are capable, from the idea, that my behaviour merits some return, of making yourself the sacrifice to a mistaken effort of gratitude; but this, Sophia, must not be; such a sacrifice would make me the most unhappy of men. I should blush to owe your consent to any other motive than that which makes me so ardently wish to obtain it. Having said this, he kept a profound silence.

He had, by penetrating into my immost thoughts, removed the difficulty I should otherwise have had in answering him. After a short pause, I spoke to him in the following terms:

The delicacy of what you have just now said, Dorimont, is perfectly consistent with the generosity of a soul which almost tempts

me

to

me to think you are above the ordinary race of men. O Dorimont, you have spared me the pains of declaring my sentiments, which I fear are not consistent with your wishes. No, thou noblest of men, I never can be yours; from the fatal moment that snatched my Horatio from me, I took an unalterable resolution, never to be another's. But let me conjure you, by that tenderness you profess for me, to gain a noble victory over yourself. Let what you feel for me be changed into friendship, wholly abstracted from every other passion; and be assured, that every sentiment, which the truest, the most unreserved friendship can inspire, shall be ever yours from me.

When I had spoke these words, I cast my eyes upon Dorimont. A death-like paleness overspread his face: he let go my hand, which he had yet held between his; and reclining his head upon his breast, he remained for some time in that mournful posture. O Constantia, what various emotions filled my soul! To behold Dorimont, the noble, the generous Dorimont, in a situation like this; to see his soul struggling between love and honour; to be witness to his agony, and to know myself the cause, overcame all my resolution. Tears filled my eyes. O Dorimont, said I, taking his hand, I cannot see you thus. Let not this unhappy passion for me---I was proceeding, but

but he interrupted me. O Sophia, said he, I am ashamed of my weakness : but who renounces calmly the fondest wishes of his soul ? I foresaw what you would say, but no preparation was sufficient to guard me from the cruel conflict. You must, you shall be obeyed, even though my life should be the sacrifice. You shall never again hear from me an expression that extends beyond the limits of friendship. When he had spoke these words, he rose from the posture he was in, and throwing himself into a chair, he remained for half an hour wholly lost in thought, without speaking a word, or even raising his eyes from the ground. He then on a sudden assumed a calm and serene air ; and coming up to me, he again took my hand, and pressed it to his lips. What a victory have you gained, madam ! said he ; in Dorimont you are no longer to behold a lover, but a friend. O Sophia, continued he with a sigh, the task is no easy one, but it is enough for me that you have desired it. When he had spoke these words, he immediately changed the discourse : nor did he ever from that moment drop a word that I could call the subject of it, to my remembrance.

When he was gone, I gave Mrs. Williams a particular account of what had passed between us. She was at once surprized and charmed with the greatness of his behaviour.

I now

I now found myself perfectly at peace. Dorimont was frequently at our house: he seemed quite cheerful and happy. I was blest with two friends, each of whom had a soul infinitely superior to the common race of mankind. I knew not, my Constantia, that this happiness was to be raised beyond the utmost pitch of human expectation.

One evening as Dorimont was sitting with me and Mrs. Williams, (and enjoying those pleasures which flow from the society of people equally equally pleased and pleasing with each other's conversation) we heard a violent knock at the door. As I did not expect any body that evening, I was at a loss to think who this could be, when a servant came up, and told me there was a gentleman below, that asked to see me immediately. As I was still apprehensive of Castilio's contrivances, I began to fear this was some new treachery of his, as I could by no means guess what gentleman should enquire for me. I entreated Dorimont to go down and see who it was. He was hardly gone, when he returned, leading in his hand, O Constantia, you will hardly believe it—My Horatio! my long lost Horatio!

O heavens! what was my amazement; I rose and flew into his arms. Joy and astonishment at once took possession of all my faculties

faculties. Every power of expression was lost---I only breathed forth, My Horatio ! and sunk upon his bosom, unable to proceed : he casting a look of inexpressible delight upon me, clasped me to his breast, with all the enraptured transport that attends the return of a once enjoyed, but long lost blessing. It wa's with difficulty I could persuade myself, this was not all a vision. How inferior is all language to the varied emotions of my soul ! I was even doubtful whether I should believe my senses; but my fond flattering heart, confessed its loved possessor. The dear, the faithful Horatio, whose death I had so greatly mourned, was again restored to me. Conceive, my Constantia, conceive the mutual transport that filled us.

When the first torrent of my joy subsided, I cast my eyes about to seek the generous Dorimont ; he was standing at a window, and appeared deeply employed in thought. Behold, said I, to Horatio, behold the man to whom you owe your Sophia ; unaided by him, death or infamy must have been my portion. At these words, Dorimont started from his reverie, and coming up to Horatio, embraced him with the utmost tenderness. I am greatly overpaid, said Dorimont, for any thing that I have done; to have contributed to the happiness of two such people is the highest joy I am capable of feeling.

Though

Though I am yet unacquainted, replied Horatio, with the nature of these obligations my Sophia speaks of, I feel already a great desire to have you for my friend, I then presented Mrs. Williams to him, whom he saluted with the utmost kindness.

My joy and amazement was now succeeded by my curiosity. By what miracle of divine goodness, said I, is my Horatio restored to me, whose imagined death, has cost me so many pangs. Horatio was preparing to satisfy my question, when Dorimont and Mrs. Williams interposed, and begged us to defer the recital till the next morning. To this, I with some difficulty consented.

Dorimont, with a manner that assured the consent of every thing he asked or proposed, offered Horatio his house, as he imagined he might be but ill provided with lodgings. Horatio accepted his obliging offer; and then Dorimont and Mrs. Williams took their leave of us, supposing it would not be disagreeable to us to be left some time together.

Horatio did not leave me till past four o'clock. I related to him, as briefly as I could, all that happened to me. He informed me in general, in what manner he had been preserved from death, but deferred the particulars of his adventures till

next morning, as I shall do till the next letter; and only add, that I am, my dear Constantia's

ever faithful and affectionate

SOPHIA.

LETTER VI.

I Went to bed full of the most delightful reflections, and enjoyed an uninterrupted repose till ten the next morning; at which hour, my Horatio, Dorimont and Mrs. Williams being all met, we went to Breakfast, after the usual compliments had passed among us, which I shall not repeat, for fear of being tedious.

My curiosity seemed not greater than the rest of the company's, to hear by what unexpected turn of fortune Horatio (whom we had so long given over as dead) had been preserved and restored to life, and to his friends.

As soon as breakfast was over, Horatio gratified our curiosities in the following terms:

My dear Sophia remembers that fatal evening, when the most unforeseen and unfortunate accident that ever befel any man, hurried me from her, at the time when I thought we were never more to be separated from each other. The pyrates, who

who had set upon me, and my servant (concluding me dead, though in reality I had only fainted with loss of blood,) were beginning to strip me; when perceiving some people at a distance, and fearing to lose my cloaths and money, they conveyed my dead body (as they thought it) on board their ship: they resolved to throw me over board, when they had robbed me of all I had about me; but, just as they were going to toss me into the sea, they perceived some signs of life in me; and one of them having more humanity than the rest, refused to let me be thrown into the water, and went to inform the captain of the vessel, that I was not dead. He ordered me to be put into a bed, and to have my wounds dressed. I came to myself in about an hour; and was soon informed where I was. The knowledge of my situation, as you may believe, gave me not a little uneasiness. My own misfortunes, however, appeared trifling, when I considered what my Sophia would suffer at the news of my death, for I did not doubt, but my servant, seeing me fall, concluded me dead.

As soon as my wounds were dressed, I desired to speak with the master of the vessel, in hopes to prevail upon him to set me at liberty, under the promise of a large ransom. But I was greatly disappointed in this

expectation ; for this man was one of the most brutal wretches that ever existed, and was so exasperated against me, because I had mortally wounded one of the pyrates, who first attacked me, and who I found was one of his favourites, that he absolutely refused to listen to the terms I offered him. He swore he would keep me all my life a slave ; and that no ransom, however great, should purchase my liberty.

When I found his cruelty was stronger even than his avarice, I imagined there was very little prospect for me to get out of his power. I determined however not to despair ; I flattered myself that some lucky opportunity might present itself to me of making my escape. I grew well in about a week's time, and then my master (for so this infamous wretch called himself) ordered me to work among the sailors, treating me with all the pride of insolent brutality.

The ship's crew were a parcel of the most abandoned creatures that can be imagined. They had nothing human about them but their figure. Their whole business was plunder and drinking : they used to lie in wait for little fishing boats, which were sometimes sailing near the coast where they had seized me ; and having made themselves masters of them, they always murdered the people they found on board. The master of this ship was an Algerine ; but

but most of the crew were English, who having been guilty of some enormous crimes enlisted themselves into his service, nor daring to stay in their own country. I learned from one of them, that Rodolpho (for so this man was called) was very rich, and carried on a great traffic for slaves, who were exposed openly to sale, at certain times of the year appointed for that purpose. I was not without hopes that when we came to land, I might find some way to escape and return to England. I determined therefore to wait patiently, and arm myself with all my resolution to bear the insults of the inhuman Rodolpho, who took a pleasure in making me sensible I was in his power. But I was always superior to my ill fortune, and treated Rodolpho with a contempt which provoked him beyond expression.

In about three weeks we arrived at Algiers; and Rodolpho ordered me to be put in chains, and carried among his other slaves. These orders were obeyed. I was conducted to a place distant about half a mile from Rodolpho's house, where I found several companions of my misery. Their employment consisted in hewing great pieces of marble and stone, which they were obliged to carry upon their shoulders to a place adjoining, where Rodolpho was going to build a magnificent house. Here they took

took off my chains, excepting one, which remained round my leg as a badge of slavery, and which being fastened on by a padlock, gave me violent pain whenever I walked or stood upon it.

I now began to give up all my former hopes ; I saw no prospect of my liberty, and a life, such as the one I was to expect, I resolved not long to support. I had my task given me ; and was told, that if at night I had not performed it, I might expect the most inhuman treatment. I found several Englishmen, and two or three of them were gentlemen, amongst these unhappy wretches. I asked them how they could bear life under such unmanly usage ; they informed me that they had hopes of making their escape ; and that if I would undertake to help them, they would carry me with them. You will easily believe with what joy I entered into their measures. I assured them I was ready to do whatever they pleased ; for that, as I was resolved not to live in the situation I was in, it was to me a matter wholly indifferent how I lost my life ; and that I had rather perish in attempting my escape, than fall by my own hand. They then told me, that when they carried their burthens to the place appointed, they were obliged to pass by the sea-side ; and that they had observed the remains of a ship, which had been wrecked upon

upon that coast. They added, that they doubted not but that with the tools they had for cutting the marble, they could put the pieces of this ship together in such a manner, as to be able to go to sea in her. I approved greatly of this scheme; and we agreed to rise in the night and put it in execution.

This ray of hope gave me great satisfaction. I set about my work; and though my task was enough to have wearied the patience of any human being, I went through it with so much resolution and success, that when the fellows came in the evening whom Rodolpho employed to overlook his slaves, they appeared very well satisfied with me. I, together with my fellow slaves, was led into a place just by; it had the appearance of a large barn; there were several little miserable beds in it; and this it seems was the nightly habitation of all those unfortunate people who fell into this monster's hands. As soon as Rodolpho's creatures were gone, we went silently to the sea shore, leaving two or three of our comrades to watch, and in case of a surprisal give us timely notice. We got together all the wood and other materials, which the winds and waves had scattered up and down the shore; the bulk of the bark was yet intire, and we found one of the masts lying whole upon the ground.

We

We continued to work several nights, without any thing happening to interrupt us. In the morning we used to thrust our vessel into a large hollow in a rock, which seemed placed there on purpose. We succeeded so well, that in a week's time we had made the ship fit to hold us. We had no sails; nor could we get any thing proper to remedy this want. We determined to make use of oars, and agreed to make our escape the succeeding night.

The excessive fatigue I had undergone, both by day and night, reduced me to a very low condition: but the speedy prospect I had of being delivered from this dismal situation, gave me strength and spirits to go through it all.

The night being come, we got undiscovered on board our ship, which was in tolerable good condition. One of the men had formerly been a sailor; to him therefore we committed the care of our vessel. We had very little provisions with us; not having been able to get any, except what we had spared from our poor allowance every day. We were seven in number; but we took a resolution to eat no more than was just necessary to keep us alive; for otherwise, we ran a great risk of perishing through famine. The pilot of our little vessel steered his course immediately for England, and gave us hopes, that we might reach

reach some friendly coast in the space of seven days. The wind was favourable, the sea calm, and we were all very cheerful, in the delightful prospect of being again restored to our liberty and native country. I indulged myself in a thousand pleasing ideas ; I anticipated the transport I should feel at the sight of my beloved Sophia, and her joy at my return : but I was not so near this happiness as I imagined. The third day of our navigation there arose a violent tempest ; the sea was prodigiously agitated ; the waves toss'd up to an amazing height : the whole heavens were darkened ; horrid peals of thunder roared over our heads ; and a prodigious flash of lightning every now and then furnished us with light sufficient to behold our danger ; for we were thrown into the midst of a great number of rocks, against some of which we expected every moment to strike.

The horrors of this scene go beyond description. The poor wretches now began to repent them bitterly of their expedition, and wished to be again in their former state of servitude. They preferred even a miserable existence to death ; and would rather have languished out their days in the most abject slavery, than perish in a moment. As to me, I beheld without emotion the destruction that threatened me ; when I considered from what I had escaped, and

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compared it with my present situation, I was far from thinking the latter the most terrible. I prepared for death as well as I could: the thoughts of my Sophia, it is true, stole upon me, and filled my soul with anxiety.

Matters were in this situation, when a violent gust of wind drove our vessel with great force against the side of a rock; the shock shattered us terribly, but did not dash us to pieces. Two of our crew gave way to the most womanly complaints; they filled the air with their cries and lamentations. I could not help reproaching them with their want of fortitude; but all I could say made no impression on them. A horrid blast of wind, stronger than the first, now arose, and whirled us round and round for a few minutes; then it threw us with a redoubled violence against the same rock; at which instant, our ship split into a thousand pieces. I was thrown by the force of a wave upon the side of a rock, and was so bruised by the blow that I had the utmost difficulty to rise, which, however, I did; and finding there was a small neck of land adjoining to the rock, I made a shift to crawl a few paces forward, and got at last upon firm ground. I found I was thrown upon a small island; it appeared to be totally uninhabited, for I saw no footsteps, nor any traces, that could lead me to imagine there were any people there

thereabout. I was ignorant what was the fate of my companions ; but I flattered myself, that they might have escaped as I had done. It grew night ; I went forward a good way, but met no living creature of any kind whatever. I now concluded this island was a desert one. It rained violently, and I knew not where to get shelter from the inclemency of the weather. I observed here and there some large trees ; but they were almost destitute of leaves, and afforded no cover at all. I returned to the place where I first set my foot, hoping to find some cavity in the rock, where I might shelter myself from the rain. I was not deceived in my expectations ; there was a large hollow in the side of a rock, into which I crept, resolving to remain there till morning.

I was in a lamentable condition ; my cloaths were all wet, and I had no place to lie upon but the hard stone, which afforded me no great prospect of repose. I threw myself all along in my sad habitation, and spent the night without once closing my eyes, in the most disagreeable reflections. The next morning, as soon as day began to break, I went out to see if I could discover what was become of the ship, and whether the place produced any thing for my sustenance. When I approached the sea, I saw four dead bodies floating on the waves,

waves, which I distinguished to be those of my unhappy comrades. I walked backwards and forwards some hours, in the utmost agitation, not knowing what would become of me. I was very hungry, and seeing some fruit which resembled an apple, grow upon a little bush, I eat two of them, and found them very pleasant to my taste. I then considered what I should do to make my nightly habitation a little more commodious. I observed a quantity of soft moss that grew on the bark of some large trees. I gathered as much as I could of this, and laid it in the sun to dry. With it I made a sort of bed, which kept me tolerably warm. I found a good many little shell fish, which the sea had left behind it on the shore, and which served me for two or three days. I flattered myself that if I had but patience, some ship passing that way would take me in.

I continued in this condition above a month. I then began to lose all hopes: yet, when I coolly considered, in what manner I had already escaped from death and slavery, I was not without hopes, that heaven would deliver me from this forlorn situation. I did not see any living creature in the island, except a particular kind of birds that come in great flocks from the sea coast.

With no garment added each morning I sub-
sevew

I subsisted pretty tolerably upon fruit and fish. I found several pieces of steel on the shore, which I imagined had remained there after the wreck of some ship that had there perished. As there was plenty of flints among the stones, I easily struck fire, and some dry wood I found served me for tinder. In this manner I used to make a fire, at which I roasted my fish. There were several small springs in the island; so that I had now tolerable food, drink, and lodging. I fixed my handkerchief upon a long stick, which I set up on the shore as a signal, in case any ship passed that way.

I remained in this situation for the space of six months, when one day, as I was walking on the shore, I spied a ship at some distance sailing very fast. I immediately made signals of distress, which fortunately they observed, and sent their long-boat to fetch me on board. I will leave you to imagine my joy at this unexpected piece of good fortune. I found her to be a French ship. I was presented to the captain; and related to him the singular manner in which I had been brought into the situation from which he had delivered me, and received from him every possible mark of distinction and politeness.

There were several young officers of quality on board, with one of whom I contracted an intimate friendship. His name

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was

was the Marquis de Bellville: he was the only son to the Duke de Bellville, one of the oldest families in France. This young nobleman was possessed of a thousand good qualities. He had an uncommon elevation of soul, an untainted honour, and the utmost generosity.

But with so many amiable qualities, he had one, which threw a shade upon them all, and was the source of the misfortunes that since beset him. He was naturally excessive passionate; the violence of his temper would so totally get the better of his reason, that, in a fit of rage, he would have committed the most extravagant actions imaginable. He used frequently to tell me, that he had taken unceasing pains to overcome this disposition, but that it had got the better of him in spite of all his endeavours.

Abstracted from this one failing, I never knew a more noble and generous soul than the Marquis de Bellville: he took a particular liking to me; and when we landed, he insisted upon my spending a few weeks at his father's house, for the recovery of my health, which had indeed suffered extremely, from the various fatigues I had undergone. I could by no means refuse this request; and after having returned my grateful thanks to the captain of the ship, I went with the Marquis to his father's house, which was situated in the midst of Paris.

The

The Duke de Bellville, to whom I was presented by his son, received me with the utmost politeness.

The first step I took when I got to land, was to write to a particular friend in England. I gave him an account of what had happened to me, and inclosed a letter for my Sophia, which I desired him to send her immediately. This letter was directed to her, at her father's house in the country, which is the reason it has never reached her hand. I begged also of this friend, to send me over what money I wanted, which he did without delay, informing me at the same time, that he had sent my letter to Sophia, pursuant to my orders.

In the mean time, I was treated with uncommon tenderness by the Duke de Bellville and his son. The latter proposed to come over to England with me. He had long an inclination to see this country; for he had a great partiality for our manners and customs, and was acquainted with all the young Englishmen of rank that were in France. I now waited impatiently for an answer from Sophia; upon the receipt of which, I resolved instantly to set sail for England. I daily enjoyed, by anticipation, the soft pleasures of meeting with her I most loved, after so cruel a separation; but this delightful prospect was in a moment chang-

ed into a scene of unparalleled horror and distress.

The Marquis de Bellville had a sister, of whom he was very fond, and indeed with reason; for every thing that nature could form, most excellent in mind and person, were in her united.

All the sentiments that refine and dignify the human mind, were particularly her's; stranger to art of every kind, her words and actions were full of those irresistible graces that dwell with beauty and innocence. Mademoiselle de Bellville lived in the house with her father. Her rank and beauty made her justly the admiration of our sex, and the envy of her own. The Duke's house was frequented by the principal nobility of France, each of them assiduous to gain the heart of his fair daughter; but Mademoiselle de Bellville remained equally indifferent to them all. Upon my first going to their house, I was presented to this lady in the usual forms. I must confess to you, had not my heart been already fixed for ever, the appearance and manners of Mademoiselle de Bellville would have engaged my whole attention.

She honoured me with a particular notice. The footing I was upon with her brother, gave me frequent opportunities of conversing with her. She seemed to take a particular pleasure in listening to the account

I gave her of all that had happened to me, and of the manners, customs, and government of our country. She was, I think, the most perfect character I ever knew. Nature had dealt out to her with a profuse hand, every quality that can adorn a woman.

The time now grew near, when the Marquis and I were to embark for England. I began to be very uneasy at having no answer from Sophia, and resolved to stay no longer in the cruel anxiety into which her silence plunged me.

A few days before that appointed for our departure, the Marquis de Bellville came into my apartment one morning, and embracing me with his accustomed tenderness; my dear Horatio, said he, I am going to-day upon a party of pleasure, and you must bear me company. With all my heart, my dear Marquis, replied I. He then told me, he was going to hunt a few miles out of town, and intended to dine at a little country place, where we had often been together upon the like occasion. Accordingly we set out, and having hunted all the morning, we came to the appointed place to dinner. I observed the Marquis was more serious than usual; I could not help rallying him upon it a little, at which he seemed displeased; and, as I knew the impetuosity of his temper, I forbore to push

the discourse any further. When dinner was over, Monsieur de Bellville proposed taking a walk into an adjacent wood, which was remarkable for the pleasantness of its situation. As we went along the Marquis seemed buried in thought; till at last stopping short on a sudden, he spoke to me in the following manner:

I am going, my dear Horatio, to give you a proof of my friendship, greater than any you have yet received. That, replied I, is hardly possible. You will think differently, said he, when you know what it is. Perceiving I listened attentively, he went on thus. I am going to make you a discovery, which will doubtless surprise and please you. Would you believe the cold—the—Mademoiselle de Bellville loves you, Horatio. How! cried I, at once astonished and afflicted. It is very true, resumed the Marquis; this is a secret I should never have known from herself; her delicacy would never have permitted her to declare it: but one of her women confessed it to me, who, being the favourite of her lady, was entrusted with the knowledge of her passion for you. As I knew my sister's sincerity was not inferior to her other virtues, I determined to know the truth of this from her own mouth. When I first mentioned it to her, she blushed and attempted to deny it; but finding I was perfectly well acquainted

quainted with her sentiments, she frankly owned to me, that you, Horatio, was the object of her tenderest affection. She conjured me upon her knees, not to betray her weakness to you : I promised her I would not ; but as I find this passion has taken too deep a root in her breast ever to be effaced, I resolved no longer to hide the knowledge of it from you. I should wrong my sister's charms, If I attempted to enforce what I have said : you have honour and generosity — they will teach you how to act. Never, I believe, was perplexity equal to mine. Ah ! my dear Marquis, said I, how distressful is the situation in which I find myself. I am truly penetrated with the distinguishing mark of honour I have just now received---but, O Bellville ! it is impossible for me--Enough, enough, interrupted the Marquis, whose eyes sparkled with indignation; and this is the return you make me ; my sister, it seems, is unworthy your acceptance. Alas ! Bellville, replied I, you blame me most unjustly ; Mademoiselle de Bellville deserves all that heaven, in its utmost profusion of blessings, can bestow---but you know that I am---A villain, replied he fiercely. How ! Bellville !---But do not hope, continued he, transported with rage, do not hope to boast of having refused and insulted my sister, this very moment shall avenge her. At these words he drew his sword,

sword, in spite of my remonstrances and intreaties. The great regard I had for him made me very unwilling to draw my sword against him: but he was too much enraged to listen to any thing I said; so that I was obliged at last to draw in my own defence. The Marquis de Bellvile observing I acted only on the defensive, grew more and more provoked; he pushed at me with the utmost violence. I still endeavoured to parry his thrusts without wounding him, till at last he aimed a blow at my heart, which I striving to avoid, my sword unfortunately slipt and entered just below the ribs. Bellville had no sooner received this wound, than he fell dead at my feet. How shall I paint to you the horror, which at that instant took possession of me! I stood gazing on the dead body of my murdered friend—a deep anguish filled my soul! despair froze my blood—I had not power to stir.

Two labourers, who were working at a small distance, came up at that instant. What have you done, Sir? said one of them to me. How did this sad accident happen? It is no matter, replied I,—I put myself into your hands; I have killed the Marquis de Bellville. At these words I gave my sword to one of them, and delivered myself into their power, resolving by my own death to expiate that of my murdered friend.

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I was

I was carried immediately to the Duke's house. His son's body was the first object that met his eyes, when we entered the gates of his hôtel. As he was particularly fond of the Marquis, you will conceive better than I can tell you, what he felt upon this occasion. I threw myself at his feet, Think not, Sir, said I, I am come to extenuate my crime; these guilty hands have spilt the blood of your unhappy son; the grief you feel cannot exceed the torments of my soul. I was proceeding, when the Duke stopt me, and, with a look of inexpressible rage, ordered me to leave his presence, lest with his own hand he should seek that justice, which the laws of France would afford him against so barbarous a murderer. I retired, unwilling to exasperate this too justly incensed father. I was led into an apartment, where I was strictly guarded, till a letter de cachet was procured by the Duke against me; and I was conducted into a dark and horrible dungeon, where I was put in chains, as if I had been a common malefactor. I expressed my resentment at this treatment: but my complaints were ineffectual; nor was it possible for me to have the least redress. The Duke de Bellville, by his rank, had an unbounded influence at court.

I was a foreigner, unknown and unprotected. Besides, the Marquis de Bellville had

had been a particular favourite with his sovereign ; it was therefore impossible for me to expect the least shadow of mercy.

I must confess to you, all my resolution was hardly sufficient to support me in this shocking situation. The dreary darkness of my prison, the horrors of an ignominious death, which, in all probability, would be preceded by the torments of the rack, tho' greatly dreadful, were yet inferior to the excruciating pangs that rent my soul.

When I considered myself as the murderer of my friend, and the ruin of an illustrious family, I looked upon myself with the utmost detestation. I became a prey to every idea that give the deepest anguish to a feeling heart. Ah! cried I, what thoughts must Mademoiselle de Bellville entertain of a wretch, who, in return for the highest obligations, has murdered her brother, and changed a late happy family into a scene of mourning and distress?

I resolved, however, let the consequence be what it would, never to declare the real cause of my duel with the Marquis de Bellville. The esteem and respect I had for Mademoiselle de Bellville, made me determine to die a thousand deaths, rather than let her suspect that I was acquainted with the affection she had for me ; and which, though through the unhappy circumstances that attended it, was the cause of all my misfor-

misfortunes, I regarded as the highest distinction any man could receive.

Among all the various ideas that tormented me, that of my Sophia was ever uppermost, ever most painful to me. Perhaps, thought I, at this moment she is offering up a thousand tender wishes for my return, whilst I, buried in a dungeon's depth, am lost to every hope of liberty or life: what will she think when the fatal news shall reach her, that Horatio suffered a shameful death for the blackest crime human nature can be guilty of?

I spent three days in agonies which conception only can reach. I cursed the arm that had been the fatal instrument of so much horror, and longed for the hour that should finish my miseries with my life.

I saw no creature but the goaler, who would not give me the least knowledge of the proceedings against me. The dungeon where I was confined had no light but what came in from a little hole in the wall, which only let in as much as gave me a prospect of the frightful place I was in, and seemed rather intended to increase the gloomy horrors of the prison. I had no bed but the bare floor, my sustenance was dry bread and water; but the excessive agonies of my mind did not suffer these hardships to make any impression upon me. The

The fourth day my goaler opened the door of my prison, followed by an officer, whom I found to be the lieutenant criminelle. He seemed moved at the terrible condition in which he found me. He appeared to be a man of sense and honour; he assured me he was extremely concerned at my sufferings; but, said he, the king was so transported with rage when he heard the Marquis de Bellville (for whom he had a particular affection) had fallen by your hand, that he ordered you to be treated with the utmost severity. The lieutenant then informed me, that, in consideration of my being a man of fashion, the king had determined to let me have a fair trial; and that he was come, by his Majesty's orders, to conduct me before my judges. He then made the goaler strike off my chains, and I went with him in his coach to the place appointed for my trial. His Majesty, attended by the Duke de Bellville, was present.

The fixed melancholy that sat upon my countenance, the dreadful condition into which the sufferings I had undergone had reduced me, made it hardly possible for any one to know me again; all the people present were moved at my appearance: even the Duke de Bellville, as I passed by his seat, seemed to look upon me with an eye of compassion; but the king, unmoved, threw

threw a glance of rage upon me, which was a sufficient token of what I had to expect. The trial did not last long ; the two men, who came up in the very moment the Marquis de Bellville fell, appeared and swore all they knew against me, which was proof sufficient of my guilt. I made a very short speech. I told his Majesty that a trifling dispute had risen between Monsieur de Bellville and me ; that he had drawn his sword first upon me ; and that I had killed him unavoidably in my own defence. Whilst I was speaking, I was seized with an emotion, which I in vain endeavoured to dissemble ; few tears in spite of myself stole into my eyes : I ended with saying, I did not even wish for mercy, but that I hoped the clemency of the king would spare me from the ignominy of the rack. The whole court seemed inclined to pity me ; but the king was too much incensed to be softened. My sentence was deferred till the next day, and I was conducted back to prison ; but thro' the kindness of the lieutenant criminel, I was put into a more tolerable one than that from which I came. The next morning I was again conducted into court, and condemned to be publickly beheaded.

I was too well prepared for this sentence to be either shocked or concerned at it. The firmness with which I listened to my condemnation, drew tears from every eye.

Several men of the first rank threw themselves at the king's feet to implore mercy for me ; but he was deaf to every voice but that of his resentment.

The Duke de Bellville was not present : I was told, he was moved even to tears when he heard I was condemned. The unfeigned sorrow I expressed for the murder of his son, convinced him his death was more my misfortune than my fault, and had not his affection for his dead son obliged him to seek justice on his murderer, I do not doubt but he would have interposed in my behalf.

I was allowed three days to prepare for death. I desired leave to write to England, in order to settle my affairs there as well as I could at such a distance, and after so long an absence. I wrote to the friend I have already mentioned to you : I sent him a circumstantial account of what had happened to me. I begged of him to take upon him the administration of my affairs. I made over all my estate to Sophia and her father (whose death I was ignorant of.) I excepted only a legacy, which I gave my friend as a mark of my gratitude for his trouble. I conjured him to soften the news of my death to Sophia as much as possible ; and not to let her know the manner of it, till the first shock she would feel from it being over, she was better able to hear the parti-

particulars of it. I should have been glad to have waited for an answer to this letter, but this was a favour I could not obtain.

I could not resist a desire to know how Mademoiselle de Bellville had behaved upon this trying occasion; but it was not very easy for me to have this curiosity satisfied.

The day before that appointed for my execution, the lieutenant criminel came to make me a visit. He informed me, that he had that morning been with the Duke de Bellville, who, he said, was sincerely afflicted at my condemnation; and had desired him to tell me from him, that he entirely forgave me the cruel accident of which I was the unhappy cause.

I took this opportunity of enquiring after Mademoiselle de Bellville. The lieutenant told me that she was inconsolable for the death of her brother; that she had remained shut up in her apartment for many days, without seeing any body; and that she was that morning set out for a country-seat of her father's, a few miles distant from Paris.

The lieutenant then took his leave of me, assuring me that he was truly concerned for my fate, and still more so from the knowledge that he could be of no use to me. I replied, that I was very sensible of his kindness; and that I was prepared for death, and should meet it with the same calmness I had heard it pronounced against me. He

then asked me if I was desirous of any spiritual assistance: I told him my religion did not allow me to accept of any from their priests; and that I should be contented with recommending myself into the hands of my Creator, to whose will I was perfectly resigned.

As soon as I was alone, I began to compose my thoughts as much as possible. I felt nothing terrible in the approach of death, unless the idea of being for ever separated from the beloved object of my fondest hopes.

The next morning about nine o'clock, the lieutenant crimineill, attended by a company of soldiers, came to conduct me to the place of execution. When we arrived there I ascended the scaffold, which was surrounded by guards.

I embraced the lieutenant; and returned him my sincerest thanks for his politeness I had received from him. I then made the usual preparations to receive the fatal blow. I told the executioner what signal I would make him to strike; and kneeling before the block, I poured out my soul to him in whose presence it was shortly to appear.

Just as I was preparing to give the appointed signal, I heard a prodigious noise among the people; and raising my head to see what was the matter, I saw one of the king's officers making his way through the crowd, and crying out with a loud voice,

Grace,

Grace, grace! I was struck with the utmost amazement at this unexpected event. The officer having now mounted the scaffold, shewed the lieutenant an order, signed by the king, to return with his prisoner, and bring him immediately before him. The lieutenant testified the utmost joy at this. Heaven, said he, interests itself in your preservation; I doubt not but the king has repented of his severity, and intends to grant you your life. You may believe I was impatient to know the strange cause of my being reprieved, at the very instant when I expected nothing but the stroke of death. When we arrived at the palace, we alighted, and I was conducted before his Majesty.

How comes it, Horatio, said the king to me in a mild tone of voice, that you did not tell us, you was not the person who slew the Marquis de Bellville?

I was confounded at these words. Your Majesty, said I, chuses to amuse yourself with me. The king replied, that the affair in question was of too serious a nature to admit of any raillery. I entreated his Majesty to explain his words, which were to me perfect riddles. I was then informed, that a few minutes after I was led to the place of execution, a stranger had appeared and required an immediate audience of the king, which being granted he threw himself at his Majesty's feet, and begged of

him instantly to send and stop my execution; for that he, and not I, had murdered the Marquis de Bellville. The king at first hesitated, whether he should give credit to this stranger's words; but he persisting positively in my innocence and his own guilt, he sent to defer my death till this mysterious affair was cleared up.

No amazement, I believe, ever equalled mine. I assured his Majesty, I was quite at a loss to penetrate the meaning of what I had heard; that it was no other arm but mine that had killed the Marquis de Bellville: but I begged to see the person who had undertaken to save my life at the expence of his own.

At these words, the king ordered one of his guards to go and fetch the stranger; and turning to me with a frown, Do not flatter yourself, said he, to elude my resentment: this appears to me to be some contrivance to impose upon me, but do not hope to succeed.

I protested, that I was as ignorant of this affair as his Majesty, and that I did not value life enough to buy it by a base artifice.

I had hardly ended these words, when the officer returned, leading with him a gentleman of a remarkable graceful appearance; but of whom I had not the smallest knowledge. Ah! Horatio, (said he, coming up to me with a manner as if we had been

been long acquainted) this is too much, this is the very extravagance of friendship; you must not die for me---No, Horatio---I would not keep a life, purchased at the expence of an innocent and too generous friend. I looked upon the person who spoke these words with astonishment, which prevented me from making any reply. The unknown then throwing himself at the king's feet, permit me, Sir, said he, to clear up to your Majesty all these circumstances, which make this affair appear so intricate. If I do not convince you beyond a doubt, that I am the real murderer of the Marquis de Bellville, I am ready to undergo every punishment which an attempt to impose upon your Majesty would deserve.

The king then ordered him to proceed; but take care, said he sternly; do not trifle with me, lest you meet with a punishment more severe than death. Every ear was now attentive. As for me, I could hardly believe that what I heard and saw was real.

The unknown then spoke in the following terms:

My name is Clerimont; I was born in the same place that gave birth to Horatio: we contracted from our infancy an inviolable friendship, of which Horatio has just given a very extraordinary proof. We always lived together in the strictest intimacy. It happened once an occasion presented itself,

itself, in which I had an opportunity of saving Horatio's life, by exposing my own : I will not tire your Majesty with a particular account of this affair.

This action of mine made a very strong impression on the generous and grateful Horatio ; he looked upon me as the preserver of his life ; and it is to this, I now owe his desire of laying it down to save mine. It happened about a year and a half ago, Horatio was set upon by some robbers, and, as all his friends imagined, murdered : but it seems they had carried him half dead on board their vessel ; and, when he recovered, they made a slave of him, as he has since told me. Three months after this unhappy affair, I came into this country to finish my travels, where I have remained ever since. About six weeks ago, I happened very fortunately to meet Horatio, whom I long imagined dead. He related to me what had befallen him ; he told me in what manner he had met with, and was treated by the Marquis de Bellville, and offered to introduce me to this young nobleman ; to which I very readily consented. The Marquis received me with a politeness and good breeding peculiar to him.

I used generally to accompany Horatio and him, in all their parties of pleasure. I was with them when this melancholy affair happened. We were all three walking together

gether after dinner ; there arose a trifling dispute between the Marquis de Bellville and me. The Marquis, being extremely passionate, drew his sword : I did the same, and we fought a considerable time, notwithstanding the endeavours Horatio made to part us. At last, I gave the Marquis a wound, of which he instantly expired, and I myself fainted with the loss of blood I had sustained from a large wound I had received in my side. Horatio took that opportunity, as I have since learned, to tell the two men who at that moment came up to us, that it was he who had killed the Marquis de Bellville, and that I had received my wound as I was endeavouring to part them. To make this look the more probable, he dipt his sword in blood. The men, not doubting what he said, conveyed me to a little house not far off, and carried Horatio, together with the marquis's dead body, to the duke's hotel. As they went along, Horatio conjured them not to say they had found a third person present ; for that his friend, though innocent, might be brought into trouble. He offered them a large purse of gold, if they would keep this part of the affair an entire secret. These men, who were very poor, gladly accepted the money, and followed their directions punctually. Horatio forbid them likewise to inform me of what had passed : he ordered them to tell me, that

that he had absconded till the affair was cleared up, and that he had prevailed on them for a large sum of money, to swear that we had both of us made our escape before they could seize us. All this they related to me, following Horatio's directions exactly. They likewise told me, that I might remain concealed in the place where I was, till my wound was well enough to stir: and then they advised me to make the best of my way to England. I gave credit to all this, as indeed it might have deceived any one.

I soon grew well, the wound I had received being but slight. I was a little surprised at Horatio's leaving me in the distress I was in; but I considered, his staying could be of no use to me, and might have endangered his own life. I gave the poor men great part of the money I had about me, which luckily was not inconsiderable. I could not help expressing to them my sorrow, for having so unhappily killed the Marquis de Bellville. Upon my saying this, they seemed amazed. How! said they, was it you that killed him? This question surprised me: I desired them to explain their meaning; upon which they told me the above particulars. I was at once astonished and afflicted at this romantic piece of gratitude in Horatio: I resolved, however, he should not execute his intention. I told the

the men the real state of the case, and intreated them, as they valued the peace of their own consciences, to make oath of the truth before your Majesty, which they are ready to do. Here Clerimont stopp'd.

My amazement increased in proportion to every word he spoke. The king then commanded the men to be brought in. Guess what I felt, when these people, falling on their knees before the king, intreated his pardon for having concealed part of the truth.

They then related every circumstance in the manner Clerimont had done; they said they had found him in the manner he had declared, but that I had assured them that I was the guilty person, and had given them a purse of gold, which they shewed the king, to engage them not to own there was any one concerned in the duel besides myself. The king, after having reprimanded them severely for their disengenuity, in an affair of so much consequence, ordered them to withdraw. He then turned to me; Well, Horatio, said he, what do you say to this?

I declared to his Majesty, that all he had heard was a contrivance of this noble stranger whose face I had never before beheld. I shall leave your Majesty to judge, said Clerimont, whether what I have said does not appear the truth: then addressing himself to me, Indeed, Horatio, said he, you carry
this

this too far. You have done enough, and it is wronging my friendship to imagine I will suffer you to lay down your life for mine. We continued some time, the one persisting, the other denying. At last the king bethought himself of an expedient, that might throw some light upon this intricate affair. He dispatched one of his officers to the Duke de Bellville, with an order to come immediately to him. We shall know from him, said the king, whether he ever knew or saw this Clerimont, or whether he ever heard his son name him. Whilst the officer was gone upon this errand, the unknown appeared greatly agitated. The officer soon returned, and brought word that the Duke was not well; and therefore begged to be excused from attending his Majesty. He added, that having informed him of the circumstances of this affair, he, the Duke, seemed surprised, and ordered him to tell the king, that he knew nothing of this stranger, nor had ever heard his son name him; but that it was possible the Marquis, who was acquainted with several English gentlemen, might have known him, without having mentioned him to his father.

The appearances now were more and more perplexed. The king began to grow out of patience, I see, said he, angrily, you have invented this story to amuse my wrath, but I am not to be dallied with: I then
threw

threw myself at his feet. I assured him, with the most solemn protestations, that I was the murderer of Bellville. Clerimont did the same ; and added, that he wondered his Majesty should hesitate to give credit to the proofs he had produced of his assertion. The king now was incensed beyond measure : I perceive, said he, with a furious look, you would save yourselves, and disappoint my vengeance ; but your artifices shall not succeed. By your own confession, you are both guilty. I doubt not but you were both concerned in the death of my dear Bellville ; and expect by this affected generosity, to escape the punishment due to your crime. Let them both die, continued he, raising his voice, A thousand lives, such as theirs, could not pay me for the loss of him whom they have murdered. Conduct them to the place of execution, said he, turning sternly to the lieutenant-criminelle. A general discontent appeared in every countenance at this severe sentence, but no one dared offer a word in our behalf. The lieutenant proceeded unwillingly to the execution of his office.

'Tis well, Sir ! said Clerimont to the king ; an hour will come, when your Majesty will repent this ill-judged severity. Saying these words, he went out of the room, and I followed him, attended by an infinite number of spectators, whom this extraordi-

nary affair had drawn together to see us. When we were seated in the lieutenant's coach, I fixed my eyes stedfastly upon the unknown, but I could not discover the smallest traces of any thing I had ever seen. I conjured him to tell me who he was, and from what impenetrable motive, he had acted the amazing scene to which I had so lately been a witness. All my intreaties were ineffectual: he only replied, that I knew him, though I pretended the contrary. We were now arrived at the place of execution: when we got upon the scaffold, the unknown insisted so eagerly upon being the first to suffer, that I consented he should, upon condition he would let me know who he was, and to whom I owed so uncommon an obligation as the desire of losing his life, though innocent, for the preservation of mine.

He then took a pencil from his pocket, and wrote a word or two on a piece of paper, which he folded up and gave me, with a strict injunction not to open it, till I saw his head severed from his shoulders. With this request I resolved to comply, tho' my impatience was excessive, to see what was there wrote, from which I expected to find the explanation of what now appeared so mysterious to me.

Clerimont now prepared himself to receive the fatal blow: but what words can paint

paint the horror and surprize that filled me; when, as he was fixing his head upon the block, in the posture which the executioner thought most convenient, I beheld a mask, made so artificially, as to represent a human face, fall to the ground, and discover the lovely features of Mademoiselle de Bellville!

Let your own imaginations represent to you what I felt—I catched the fainting fair one in my arms. Every side resounded with acclamations: the mob rushed tumultuously round us, in spite of the guards that were planted on the scaffold. Mademoiselle de Bellville was ready to sink into the earth with shame and confusion, at being in this manner discovered and exposed to the eager gazings of the astonished multitude.

The lieutenant-criminelle, whose wonder was not inferior to mine, entreated us to get again into his coach, which we did with the utmost difficulty. The people followed us with loud huzzas all the way. As we went along, I conjured the lieutenant to stop at his own house, which was in our way, and carry Mademoiselle de Bellville into it, that she might recover her fainting spirits, which the fright and agitation she had undergone, had almost overcome her. The lieutenant took my advice, and conducted Mademoiselle de Bellville into an

apartment, where he left her in the care of one of his nieces who lived with him. We then proceeded to the palace. I know not, said the lieutenant, what effect this may have upon the king; but I think he will hardly send you to the scaffold a third time. As soon as we were admitted to the king's presence, I threw myself at his feet, and related what had just happened; to the truth of which, the lieutenant and all the other officers bore testimony. His Majesty listened to my discourse with a surprize mixed with admiration. When I had ended, he raised me with great condescension. I see, Horatio, said he, you are the immediate care of Heaven; nothing but its interposition could have saved you from death. I will no longer dispute its will: I not only pardon you, continued he, but I will do every thing in my power, to make you amends for the ill treatment you have received. When the king had pronounced these words, he embraced me very graciously; and turning to the people, Who, said he, would not have been Horatio, to have been so saved! He then dismissed me, and recommended me to the care of the lieutenant-criminelle. I went with him to his house, where the first idea that presented itself to me, was to pour my warmest acknowledgments at the feet of my fair deliverer. But I was informed, she had forbid any

any one to approach her, and I did not dare attempt to disobey her commands. I spent all that night in a thousand perplexing reflections. The amazing generosity of Mademoiselle de Bellville, called for my most tender gratitude. The proof I had received of her affection for me, was too evident to allow me to pretend to be ignorant of it. Mademoiselle de Bellville had offered herself a voluntary sacrifice for me---she loved me, it was plain. Could I do less than put my fate into her hands? But in what manner to do this? Would it not wear the air of presumption in me, to suppose I was necessary to her happiness? Could I, already engaged, offer my hand to another? Yet how was I to avoid it, without appearing the most contemptible of men? I resolved to leave the determination of this to the generous Mademoiselle de Bellville. She was perfectly well acquainted with my engagements to Sophia. I had therefore every thing to hope from her exalted delicacy. To her I owed my life. To her therefore I ought to refer the disposal of it.

I could not help entertaining some fears, lest the Duke de Bellville should show any displeasure to his daughter, for having thus exposed herself for the murderer of her brother. As soon as the morning came, I went to his hotel, and entreated him to favour me with a moment's audience: this

he granted. I found him just risen from his bed, and seemingly indisposed. I approached him with respect, mingled with fear and remorse; I threw myself on my knees, and spoke in the following manner:

You have doubtless been informed, Sir, of the very extraordinary manner in which I have been saved from death. The king has granted me his pardon—I dare not even hope to obtain yours: yet, believe me, Sir, the Marquis de Bellville was hardly dearer to his father than to me; you have it yet in your power to revenge his death---At these words, I opened my bosom, and offered the Duke my sword; Strike, said I, strike the murderer of your son; and, believe me, my own death will not give me half the pain his has cost me.

The manner in which I spoke these words convinced the duke that they were the sentiments of my heart. He fixed his eyes upon me for some time; then raising me from the ground, Horatio, said he, I am satisfied. Your behaviour convinces me, that you are the most generous of men. I know too well, that my son's violent and ungovernable temper drew upon him the unfortunate accident that has cost me so many miserable hours. Your sufferings have already exceeded your crime, or rather misfortune. I have done all that the duty of a father exacts of me. Let me now pay what

what is due to your virtue and generosity. At these words, the Duke took me in his arms: come, Horatio, continued he, let us endeavour to forget what has passed. I will look upon you henceforward as my son. Ah! my lord, replied I, transported with joy and gratitude; how greatly does your goodness go beyond what Idared hope? The remorse I felt for Bellville's death, rushed upon me at that moment, even stronger if possible, than I had felt it before. The duke observed my agitation. Enough, Horatio, said he, what is done is irremediable: he then turned the discourse upon his daughter. He exprest some little resentment at the idea of her having thus exposed herself to the eyes of all France: but, said he, the generosity and noble courage she has shown, must plead her excuse for what would otherwise appear the height of extravagance and impudence? The duke asked, whether I was informed of the manner in which his daughter had formed and executed her plot. I told him I was not; and that the story whichshe had told the king, and the probability of the circumstances with which she had related it, were the objects of my greatest curiosity and admiration. Last night, said the duke, I had a particular account of it from her woman, who, it seems, was the confident and manager of the whole. You may, perhaps, chuse to hear it from her own mouth; and I make no doubt but she will,

will, without hesitation, repeat it to you. I am going, added he, to the house of the lieutenant-criminelle; for, I know my daughter is afraid to return home, till she is assured of my forgiveness. Ah! Sir, said I, for heaven's sake, let Mademoiselle de Bellville know how deeply I am penetrated with the sense of her goodness. You shall tell her yourself, replied the duke, for I expect to find you here at my return. He then ordered one of his servants to tell Marianne (which was the name of Mademoiselle de Bellville's woman) to come up; and as soon as she came up into the room, he left us. Marianne was a very pretty genteel young woman. She entered into conversation with me, with great politeness. The discourse soon turned upon the late ~~extraord~~ nary transaction, of which she gave the following account.

Here, my dear Constantia, you must allow me to stop; for I have already made my letter of an uncommon length. You may guess what different emotions I suffered, whilst Horatio was speaking; what I felt for him in the tempest, on the scaffold, and in every scene through which he passed. D'Urfey and Mrs. Williams listened with the utmost surprize and attention. I shall resume the remainder of my Horatio's adventures in my next letter. I am, my dearest

Constantia's ever faithful

SOPHIA.

LET-

LETTER VII.

I will resume the thread of my Horatio's adventures, without any previous discourse; for I imagine you are more impatient to hear that than any thing else I can say.

I begged of Marianne to seat herself by me, which she did, and spoke to me as follows :

I was no stranger to the passion Mademoiselle de Bellville had for you. She had entrusted me with it from the beginning: she had resolved never to reveal this secret to any one but me. The anxiety and inward pain I saw her suffer from it, determined me to acquaint her brother with it. When Mademoiselle de Bellville found I had betrayed her in this manner, she reproached me severely for this breach of confidence. I loved her too well, not to be excessively sorry at having incurred her displeasure. I soon convinced her, that what I had done, proceeded rather from my affection for her, than from a voluntary breach of trust. She forgave my indiscreet zeal, (for so it proved) under a strict promise, that I would never again betray any secret with which she intrusted me. She then told me (a circumstance I was before ignorant of) that you was engaged to a lady in England. I now repented of what I had done, but it was too late; Mademoiselle de Bellville

Bellville conjured her brother not to give you the smallest hint of what he knew; he promised her he would not; you only know whether he kept his word or not.

A few days after the unfortunate duel between you and the Marquis de Bellville happened, Mademoiselle de Bellville was struck with the utmost horror when the news of it reached her ears. Her concern for the loss of her brother, though excessive, was yet inferior to her distress, when she considered you as his murderer, and foresaw all the consequences attending this rash deed. She gave herself up to the most immoderate grief. In the space of a few days, you were tried and condemned. The firmness and nobleness of your behaviour drew upon you the compassion and admiration of every one. Paris resounded with your praises, and with murmurs at the king's severity. When Mademoiselle de Bellville was informed of your condemnation, she abandoned herself to despair. Ah! Marianne, said she, I fear I have been the subject of this unfortunate quarrel. My brother has certainly revealed to Horatio my love for him. Horatio perhaps urged his engagement with another, and my brother's impetuous temper has drawn on the duel. It was impossible for me to persuade her this was not the case; she had taken it strongly into her head. His delicacy, said she, would not

not suffer him to declare it: but he shall not have the glory of being generous alone; I will save his life, or die with him. Marianne, continued she, I want your assistance: you have now an opportunity to convince me, by your fidelity, in what I am going to employ you in, that your sorrow for having before betrayed me, was sincere. I assured her, I was ready to serve her even at the expence of my life, and that no power on earth should influence me to betray the trust she reposed in me. She seemed satisfied with my protestations. We have no time to lose, my dear Marianne, said she, the project I have formed must be executed without delay. The first thing we must do, is to find out some disguise for me, so that no body may be able to know me. That, replied I, will be difficult. You may easily conceal your person, but how can you disguise your face? No artifice can effectually hide those lovely features. That, replied she, is my greatest difficulty. At that moment I bethought myself of a most happy expedient. I recollect I had a cousin in Paris, who was very ingenious, and had found out a method of making masks so perfectly like a human face, that it was impossible for any one to discover the cheat. He had got a great deal of money by this invention: he used to make them for the masquerade; and the diversion they occasioned

ened by the odd mistakes people made in those disguises, drew an universal encouragement upon him, from all those who frequented those places.

I mentioned this to Mademoiselle de Bellville, who applauded me extremely for the lucky thought. She conjured me to go instantly to him, and order him to make one of these masks, according to the directions she gave me ; after which, said she, run instantly to a taylor, and order him to make a suit of cloaths for a relation of yours, who is much about your own stature ; they will fit me, for there is not much difference in our persons. I was very anxious to know the use she intended to make of those things, but she refused to satisfy my curiosity till they were done, and in her possession. I went without delay to my cousin's, and ordered him to make one of these masks for an acquaintance of mine, who was going upon a frolick : you must make haste, said said I, otherwise it will be of no use. The person for whom it is, will reward your expedition. My cousin was very desirous of knowing for whom it was intended ; but I told him, I was not permitted to disclose the gentleman's name. I then hurried to the taylor, to whom I told a very plausible story : both my cousin and he promised to get the things ready that day, and appointed me to fetch them at seven o'clock

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in the evening. I returned to Mademoiselle de Bellville, who was extremely pleased with my diligence.

To facilitate the execution of my scheme, said she, I must pretend to go to-morrow to my father's country seat, and you must find me some secret place to lodge in. This I promised her I would do; I knew a poor honest woman, who had a little house just out of Paris; and here I proposed she should stay as long as she pleased.

There yet remains the most difficult task of all, continued Mademoiselle de Bellville, and without which, all we have yet done will be of no service, and that is, to find out the men who came up to Horatio when he killed my brother, and appeared against him at his trial. Indeed, Madam, said I, I know not how to bring this about. Ah! Marianne, replied Mademoiselle de Bellville, do not refuse me your assistance, without which I can do nothing. Madam, answered I, if you can but point out the method of finding them, I will readily undertake it. I am as much at a loss as you, said she; but as they are poor men who work hereabouts in the fields, I should imagine you might find them by enquiring. I assured her I would do my utmost endeavours; but I told her, my heart foreboded some fatal consequence would come of her undertaking. Never trouble your head about that, said

Mademoiselle de Bellville, with a severity in her look, which I had never before seen her assume ; follow my directions, and leave the consequence to me : whatever happens, I will take care you shall not suffer. The air with which she spoke these words, pierced me to the soul. The native sweetness and gentleness of her temper, made the displeasure she then shewed me appear more terrible to me. Ah ! Madam, said I, with tears in my eyes, do not wrong me so much, as to imagine it is the fear of what may happen to me, that makes me unwilling to engage in this affair ! I only dread lest you should involve yourself in any misfortune ; and I should never forgive myself for being instrumental to it. Mademoiselle de Bellville, in a moment, resumed her accustomed goodness. My dear Marianne, said she, I believe what you say ; but fear nothing. I shall take care not to draw either you or myself into any misfortune ; do not therefore any longer oppose my resolution ; for no power on earth can oblige me to forget it. All I ask of you is, to serve me as far as lies in your power : I then set my invention to work to find out these men. I went to the woman at whose house I intended Mademoiselle de Bellville should lodge. I told her a relation of mine was coming to stay a night or two at her house, till he could provide himself with a more convenient lodging.

lodging. I asked her, by way of discourse, whether she knew any thing of the two men who had found the dead body of the Marquis de Bellville and had carried it, together with the person who killed him, to the duke's hotel. I know one of them very well, said the old woman, he comes sometimes to my house, for he used to work in my grounds. I am desirous, answered I, to hear from himself an account of this melancholy affair. The old woman told me he would be at her house that very evening, and that she would keep him till I came. I then returned to Mademoiselle de Bellville, to tell her what I had done : she embraced me for my good news. Well, said she, I must see this man, but I must first be disguised, so that he may not know me : when you see him this evening, tell him your relation has likewise a curiosity of hearing an account of this affair ; bid him bring with him his fellow-labourer, who was working with him, and came up (tho' too late to my brother's assistance at the same time).

Where will you see them, madam ? said I, wondering what strange design she had in her head. At the old woman's house tomorrow at twelve o'clock, replied Mademoiselle de Bellville. I executed these orders, which I did not dare disobey, tho' I trembled for their consequences.

I returned to the old woman's, where I found the man. After talking to him some

time, I told him the story of my relation's wanting to see him, as well as me. As he is very generous, said I, he will probably give you something for your trouble in relating the affair to him; so you had better bring your companion with you, and he may get something too. The poor man seemed very thankful, and promised to come with his fellow-labourer at the appointed hour. As soon as I gave Mademoiselle de Bellville an account of this, she desired me to go to my cousin's, and the taylor's, and hasten them as much as possible. She gave me money to pay them both. Accordingly, at seven o'clock I went to them; and found the cloaths and the mask quite ready. I paid for them, and rewarded my cousin and the taylor very handsomely for the haste they had made. The taylor seemed surprized at my refusing to let him carry his work home; but I made so artful an excuse, that he had not the least suspicion. I wrapped up the cloaths in as little a compass as I could. I fastened the mask so well under my upper petticoat, that no one could perceive I had any thing more about me than usual. I then made the best of my way home, trembling lest any body should see me, and discover what I had carried. I came into this hotel by a back-door, and was coming up a pair of back-stairs into Mademoiselle de Bell-

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Bellville's apartment; when, to my inexpressible surprize, I met the duke, who had been to see his daughter: you may believe I was terribly frightened. What have you there, child? said the duke, seeing me with a bundle under my arm. Only, replied I, half dead with fear, a new gown of my lady's; Very well, said the duke, and took no farther notice. When I entered the room, I told Mademoiselle de Bellville how narrowly I had escaped being found out. Well, said she, smiling, heaven favours my design. My father has been with me. I told him I was resolved to go to-morrow morning very early to the country, and that I should take only you with me. To this he immediately consented, saying he would follow me in a few days; but before that time, my scheme will be executed. Come, continued she, lock the door, and let me try my things. They all fitted exactly, especially the mask, which was made to fasten on behind at the roots of the hair so dextrously, that it was impossible for any body to suspect it was artificial. Mademoiselle de Bellville appeared very much pleased at the success she had met with. You must hire a post chaise to-morrow, said she, and we will set out at six o'clock for the good woman's house. I again intreated Mademoiselle de Bellville to tell me what was the scheme she meditated. You shall know to-

morrow, my dear Marianne, said she, but do not ask me till then.

I now grew very uneasy: I doubted not but Mademoiselle de Bellville had some dangerous project in her head. I blamed myself for the assistance I had given her. I could not think of communicating my fears to the duke. I knew Mademoiselle de Bellville would never forgive me if I betrayed her. I had too great an awe of her, to venture to give her any more advice: besides, I saw she was determined, and I knew, that with the greatest sweetness of disposition, that ever dwelt in a human breast; she possessed a firmness and resolution which nothing in the world could shake.

Mademoiselle de Bellville spent the rest of the evening in a deep melancholy. She was totally absent to every thing I said or did. She ordered me to lie with her, that I might wake early the next morning; she spent the night without sleeping, and rose before break of day. I got every thing ready, and we set out for the appointed place. When we had got within half a mile of it, we ordered the postilion to stop, saying we would walk the rest of the way.

We gave him five guineas, and forbid him to say where he left us. We went a little into a small wood, where, being secure from sight, Mademoiselle de Bellville equipped herself in the manner you saw her appear

appear before the king. We then proceeded to the old woman's house, who, taking Mademoiselle de Bellville for my relation, treated her very civilly. At twelve o'clock, the two men came by appointment, and Mademoiselle de Bellville ordered me to leave her alone with them. After they had been with her about an hour, they came out of the room, and taking their leaves slightly, they went away. As soon as I went into her, she said, Now Marianne, I will trust you with my intentions. She told me, she had, with a large sum of money bribed them to swear to the truth of an account she dictated to them. The circumstances of which you know. She then repeated to me the story she had invented to deceive the king. When she had done speaking, I threw myself on my knees before her, and conjured her with tears, not to pursue this wild scheme. I represented to her all the dangers and difficulties attending it. The grief her father would suffer from the desperate action, the shame that attended it, if she was discovered, as most likely she would be. I added, that had I guessed her intentions, I would have bore the utmost marks of her displeasure, rather than have assisted her in this unheard-of scheme. She heard me unmoved — Do you imagine, said she, calmly, my own imagination has not already suggested to me all you have said? Can your

your arguments be stronger than those which the love of life, and the duty which I owe my father, offer to me?

Cease then your fruitless entreaties. You know my resolutions are unalterable. Take this ring, continued she, pulling a diamond from her finger, it is worth money sufficient to provide for you. If you dread my father's anger, retire into a convent, till the first heat of his resentment is over. His curiosity to know the particulars of this affair will oblige him to seek from you the knowledge of it; and when he hears the circumstances, he will find you are not to blame. Do not grieve yourself for me, said she, observing my emotion. I am happier in having this opportunity of giving a proof of exalted love, than I should be in the possession of all the blessings life could afford me.

I found all I could say was useless. I remained therefore silent and afflicted.

The next day, which was that appointed for your execution, Mademoiselle de Bellville rose some hours before day. She told the woman of the house she was going out on some business, and paid what she owed her, because, she said, she was uncertain when she should return. When I saw her prepare to leave the house, I was struck with the most lively anguish. I was not able to speak a word. Mademoiselle de Bellville

Bellville embraced me tenderly, and advised me to go directly to a convent she named to me. She then left me. I threw myself upon the bed, resolving to remain there, till I heard the issue of this strange affair.

All that happened you know. The news soon reached me. I was at once amazed and rejoiced, when I heard in what manner Mademoiselle de Bellville had been discovered; and, that that discovery had saved both her own life and yours.

I soon heard that she was at the house of the lieutenant-criminelle. I immediately went thither, where I found her overwhelmed with shame, having been so publickly exposed. She told me, that finding she was not likely to succeed, she had determined to die with you; but that, as she was fixing her head upon the block, the mask, by some accident, was loosened and fell off.

Late last night, the king sent for the duke de Bellville, whom he kept with him near two hours; I flatter myself, that the purport of the king's conversation, was to dispose him to receive his daughter favourably. He sent for me just as I was going to bed. I came here, not without some apprehensions of his displeasure against me, for the hand I had in the affair. He ordered me to give him a particular account of it, which I complied with. He listened to me,

me, without expressing any anger. He blamed me greatly for not having revealed this to him in the beginning; and then, without telling me what his intentions were with regard to his daughter, he ordered me to withdraw.

Here Marianne ended. Mademoiselle de Bellville's behaviour filled my whole soul with wonder, and the most perfect gratitude. I thanked Marianne for the trouble she had taken, in giving me the above relation. I owned to her that the conjecture Mademoiselle de Bellville had formed, concerning my duel with her brother, was a true one. We continued our discourse, till we saw the duke's coach stop, and he and his daughter alight from it.

I cannot describe to you what strange emotions darted themselves through my bosom at that moment. When Mademoiselle de Bellville and her father came into the room, my trembling limbs with difficulty bore me to the feet of my fair deliverer, whose hand I pressed fervently to my lips---An emphatic silence reigned mutual---more expressive than all the pompous energy of language.

Blushes and confusion overspread the cheeks of Mademoiselle de Bellville. Neither of us had power to speak. At last the duke interrupted this silence. Every thing, said he, is now over. I not only forgive, but

but applaud the action my daughter has performed. I leave it entirely to you in what manner to act; and, let your determination be what it will, you may be certain of having my approbation. When he had said this, he was going out of the room, but Mademoiselle de Bellville desired him to stay, and suffering me still to hold her hand, she spoke to me in the following terms.

After what I have done, Horatio, it would be vain for me to deny my real sentiments with regard to you. I shall own, without a blush, that you are the only man I ever did, or ever can love. But do not imagine my affection for you is attended with any of that weakness which generally accompanies this passion. I would have died for you, Horatio—Did that resolution appear noble? The one I have taken is much nobler.—Your heart, your vows, can never be mine; your gratitude is--your esteem shall be—You imagine, perhaps, that I shall accept the sacrifice you have prepared to make me of yourself; but here you are mistaken; for I swear by heaven I will never give my hand to any man.

She spoke these words with an air and manner that increased my admiration of her almost to adoration. I shall not repeat to you what I said to her, nor in how many different ways I poured out my soul before her.

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The duke exprest his admiration of his daughter's behaviour in high terms of approbation. Mademoiselle de Bellville begged me to leave France immediately, and return to my native country; from whence I had too long been absent. Do not think, said she, to stay any longer here on my account, for after to-morrow you will not again see me; I shall retire into a convent the next day; and enjoy in my retirement the satisfaction of having loved, without weakness, and of knowing that you owe both life and happiness to me.

I now proposed to leave France as soon as possible; and determined to embark on the same hour that Mademoiselle de Bellville went into the convent. I went the next day to take my leave of the duke and her. When I approached her, to take my last farewell, I saw a starting tear. Farewell, Horatio, said she, with a look of inexpref-sible softneſſ---farewell for ever---let me hear you are happy, and then believe that I am ſo. Remember, when you are in England, there are women here not unworthy your esteem——I had almost ſaid your tenderneſſ.

This ſcene unman'd me quite; and tears filled my eyes---unspeakable distress my soul. Mademoiselle de Bellville ſaw, ſhared, and pitied my anxiety. What am I doing? ſaid ſhe. O Horatio, I dare not stay any longer; once

once more adieu, thou noblest and most beloved of men. At these words she withdrew, leaving me in a situation of mind which no words can describe.

I took leave as well as I could of the duke, who told me that the king desired to see me before I left France. As I intended to set out early the next morning, I waited on his Majesty that evening, who treated me with the utmost condescension, and at parting gave me his own picture set round with rubies. Early the next morning I set out, and arrived safe at Dover in a few days.

I came from thence to London, where the first thing I did, was to go to the friend to whom I had given an account of my condemnation: he was amazed to see me. I gave him a brief relation of what had happened to me. I eagerly enquired what was become of Sophia: but what was my distress when he told me, that having informed himself about her, he had not been able to find her; that he had heard her father was dead, and left her in very indifferent circumstances; and that she had quitted the place where her father's estate had been, and nobody knew what was become of her. I now began to persuade myself, that I was doomed to be always unhappy; and that disappointment and affliction was the portion heaven destined for me: but it happened very fortunately, that I took a lodgings

in that very house which my Sophia left when she came here. As I was asking the man of the house what lodgers he lately had, he mentioned several, and amongst them a young lady, who, by the description he gave of her, I soon discovered to be Sophia. I asked him eagerly, if he knew where she now lodged ; he told me he did, and then gave me a direction here.

Here Horatio ended his discourse. The amazing scenes through which he had passed, afforded us matter of surprise and conversation for some hours. The character of Mademoiselle de Bellville was so uncommonly great, that we dwelt upon it for a long while, with the highest admiration.

Dorimont soon resumed all his wonted gaiety of behaviour, my dear Horatio grew extremely fond of him, and I had the satisfaction to see them in a very little time inseparable friends. After Horatio had staid with us about ten days, he found it necessary to go down to put his affairs a little in order. His friend, of whom you have heard me speak, had hitherto taken care of them. ~~Horatio~~ was to return to London in a few days, and then our nuptials were to be celebrated. Whilst he was absent Dorimont behaved with the utmost delicacy : the lover was intirely lost in the friend ; nor have I ever seen or heard a word or a look from

from him, inconsistent with that sacred title.

Horatio returned to us in about a week's time ; and we were married without any witnesses but Dorimont and Mrs. Williams. Immediately after this we set out for the country : Dorimont had some business which obliged him to stay behind ; but he followed us in a very few days. Horatio then wrote to Mademoiselle de Bellville, in obedience to her commands. I also begged to send her a letter, in which I said all that my respect and tenderness for her suggested to me. We received a very polite and kind answer, in which Mademoiselle de Bellville told us, that her father had insisted so strenuously upon her leaving the convent and living again with him, that she thought her duty obliged her to comply with his desire : she insisted upon our coming over to see her, which we did the spring of the succeeding year. As Dorimont's desire to see Mademoiselle de Bellville was not less than mine, he accompanied us. We were received by the duke and his daughter with that peculiar good breeding, which is the characteristic of the French nation.

Prepared as I was to admire and love Mademoiselle de Bellville---I was struck with the distinguishing graces of her appearance and manners. She treated me with the most polite distinction ; she ho-

noured me with her friendship; and never, I believe, was there a more perfect one than that which we contracted together.

It is only souls of a certain kind that can conceive the happiness flowing from a society like ours.

Friendship unmixed—confidence unbounded---reigned among us, and reigned uninterrupted.

We staid in France a year. Mademoiselle de Bellville and I were greatly afflicted at being separated from each other. She condescended at parting to promise me she would return my visit, when she could prevail on her father to part with her. We agreed to keep up a constant correspondence, which we have faithfully done. Mademoiselle de Bellville's letters are of a piece with every thing she does; her style and expression abounds with that delicacy and refinement of thinking, which so particularly distinguishes her among women.

My Horatio behaves to me with the fondness of a lover, mixt with the respectful tenderness of a friend.

Dorimont is perfectly happy. Every day presents him with the exalted pleasure of being witness to the felicity of those most dear to him, and the consciousness of their owing this felicity in a great measure to him.

The death of Mrs. Williams, which happened very lately, interrupted for a time now

this blissful scene ; but it is right I should now and then recollect, that I am not totally exempted from every sense but that of pleasure.

Thus, my dearest Constantia, I have obeyed your commands. I have conducted you through every scene of my life, till that period of it when I became acquainted with you ; all that has happened since then, you know.

Let the willingness with which I have gone through this tedious task, serve my Constantia as a convincing proof, how truly and tenderly I am her ever faithful

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